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# Interpreting shame: affect, touch, and the formation of the Christian self

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# INTERPRETING SHAME:

# AFFECT, TOUCH, AND THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SELF

by

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DEDICATION

For Rebecca

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Shame is always easier to handle if you have someone to share it with.*[1]

Craig Thompson, *Blankets*

Throughout writing this dissertation, I have thought deeply about all of those strong souls who have joined with me in managing shame, who have served as a source of repair, who have shown me love, and who have supported my academic journey:

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[1] Craig Thompson, Blankets (Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2003), 390.
[2] Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," accessed January 16, 2015,

have grown, who has witnessed many struggles, triumphs, and changes along the way. Your spirit, creativity, and constancy have been and continue to be a source of energy and encouragement.

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> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference.[2]

Both that morning equally lay, in leaves no step had trodden black, but without "you all," I could not have discerned the one less travelled. In love, I thank you.

[2] Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173536

**SHAME AND THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SELF**

(Order No. )

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the function of shame within Christian texts and practice through the lens of affect theory and trauma studies. A focus on the deleterious effects of interred shame and shame's role in attachment presses theology to name corporeal shame, understand it as distinguished from guilt, and recognize how it relates to attachment and human bonding. Distinguishing shame from guilt provides conceptual markers of shame, shifting the focus away from the image of the lonely, guilty sinner and toward a self both attached to others and to God. An analysis of classic theological texts along with an exploration of touch in Christian practice discloses that shame must be disinterred and faced in order to repair its negative effects and to restore its natural function in attachment.

An analysis of Augustine's *The City of God* reveals shame's emergence in Augustine's theology embodied by the notion of "covering-up," which impedes attachment to God. In *The Nature and Destiny of Man,* Reinhold Niebuhr's notions of sensuality and pride reflect shame, yet Niebuhr subsumes shame under other terms. Examining the place of shame in these major works and displaying the continual covering-over of shame in these theologian's descriptions of the human condition

exposes shame's toxicity but also unveils shame as indicative of attachment. Augustine's notion that the forehead serves as the seat of shame parallels affect theory's location of affective emergence on the face and corporeally situates shame on the forehead.

The final chapter displays what it would mean to take seriously the implications of affect in theological anthropology and practical theology. Both affect theory and trauma studies underscore the somatic and textual interactions that create a shamed self. This dissertation turns to the liturgical enactment of Christian practices, highlighting the importance of touch in both harm and repair. Exploring the moment of touch in the imposition of ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday develops touch as an affective encounter with shame. This interdisciplinary study of shame broadens insights about how Christian theologians interpret the human condition, as disinterred shame directs the self towards its greatest attachments: connection to others and to God.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

*Not everything that can be faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.*[1]

*James Baldwin*

Christian rhetoric not only shapes minds but also bodies.[2] The idea that rhetoric "shapes speech" is not new, but recent attention in the theological reception of the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu turns to rhetoric to think about how it uniquely shapes Christian bodies.[3] Turning attention to the creation and repair of "shamed" bodies reveals that shame becomes interred,[4] or stored in the body, and therefore functions maladaptively in the formation of the Christian self. In this process, messages about shame internalized as beliefs, values, and norms, or externalized through projection onto

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[1]James Baldwin, accessed January 16, 2015, http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/14374-not-everything-that-is-faced-can-be-changed-but-nothing.

[2] Rhetoric in this dissertation refers to persuasive doctrine, liturgical sources, and theological writing that forms the Christian self. This dissertation's frame concurs with Mark D. Jordan's method articulated in *Recruiting Young Love: How Christian's Talk about Homosexuality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011): "studying the effects of rhetoric means studying its circulation into lives," (xvi).

[3] See Gary David Comstock and Susan E. Henking, eds., *Que(e)rying Religion: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Continuum, 1997); Gerard Loughlin, ed., *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Lynne Huffer, *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking Foundations of Queer Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Christopher Irvine, *The Art of God: The Making of Christians and the Meaning of Worship* (Great Britain: Liturgy Training Publications, 2006); Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Jordan, *Recruiting Young Love;* Daniel Franklin E. Pilario, *Back to the Rough Grounds of Praxis: Exploring Theological Method with Pierre Bourdieu* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005); Kieran Flanagan, *The Enchantment of Sociology: A Study of Theology and Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996).

[4] The concept of shame's interment or shame interred is one developed specifically for this project. Shame resides as a biological source or affect in the body. I use the word "inter" to signify the way(s) that shame becomes buried in the body, when it is overlaid by other terms and experiences that mask or bypass shame. Further, I contend that the interment of shame in the body becomes problematic, because in this case, shame goes unnamed.

others, emerge viscerally in the self, supported by biological or somatic memory. Uncovering and highlighting what is unknown about shame offers new ways of thinking about how theology both participates in and potentially disinters shame in the Christian self. To this end, I place shame theories, namely affect theory and trauma studies, in dialogue with traditional theological sources and practice in the consideration of the formation of the Christian self.[5] Shame serves a biological and neurological function in the body, and understanding the implications of visceral, innate shame and its implications for attachment is critical for developing a responsible theological anthropology. In addition, this project adds a theological dimension to research on shame's role in self-understanding conducted in the humanities and social sciences.

Both affect and trauma theories follow a strain of interdisciplinary studies that move psychoanalysis out of the distinctively scholarly inquiry of psychology to a broader discourse. Books such as Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* bridge the humanities and social sciences, so that affects such as shame and guilt become interpreted from multiple disciplinary angles. Through engagement with affect theory and trauma studies, I explore the implications of shame when more carefully distinguished from guilt for theological anthropology. I show that shame is both deeply associated with embodiment and closely related to attachment.

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[5] Michel Foucault's psycho-medical disciplining of the self in his analysis of the panopticon in *Discipline & Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1975; reprint, New York: Second Vintage Books, 1995) illustrates a kind of self formation; See also Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (New York: Oxford, 1985), where humans have the capacity to make the world and the self; William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), where torture creates human and social bodies; and Karmen MacKendrick, *Fragmentation and Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

As an affect, the visceral portion of emotions, shame functions naturally in the body. For instance, shame aims to reduce facial communication; inhibiting or restraining the affect of interest or enjoyment, but not completely eradicating either, shame innately motivates the turning of the head or the down casting of the eyes to prohibit exposure.[6] As such, shame relies on relationships of interest for its emergence, but it also subsequently interferes with secure relational bonds.[7]

Furthermore, neurobiological and psychological research has shown that affects like shame have different bodily expressions and have distinctive impacts on the body.[8] Shame functions differently in the body than guilt does and is not as easily recognized.[9] Through a reading of seminal texts well known within the Christian tradition, I demonstrate how shame persists, thematically present in those texts in ways that cannot simply be assimilated into a discourse of guilt. Moreover, in order to address the way in which shame functions in the formation of the Christian self, shame must be

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[6] Silvan Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 4 Vols., (1962; Reprint, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008), 354.

[7] Ibid., 402-403; Donald L. Nathanson, *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 325; see also Helen Block Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1971) where she discusses repair and the reduction of shame through the therapeutic alliance.

[8] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (London: Penguin Books, 1994); June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing, *Shame and Guilt* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2002); Alan Schore, *Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004). It is important to note that psychological inquires, while founded on classic psychoanalytic theory, are informed by affect theory and are meant to prime readers, pointing to subjects for future research regarding shame and guilt; I am not claiming to be a psychologist in this research project.

[9] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 147.

distinguished from guilt and engaged with differently.[10] Along with practice, rhetoric in the Christian tradition explicitly and implicitly inters shame and forms "shamed" bodies as it encourages and establishes a Christian and/or Christianized self.

Christian interpretations of shame and guilt have laid the foundation for how each are theologically interpreted today. My references to the role of shame and affect in Christian tradition support a robust theological analysis of the relationships between shame, pride, sin, and guilt. Further, locating shame as an affect opens up a discourse between theological notions of shame and the biological, neurological understanding of shame in self-development, self-delimitation, and notions of attachment. Shame emerges in major theological anthropological literature and Christian practice in veiled and inconspicuous ways.[11] Distinguishing where shame appears in theological discourse, for instance by pointing to where language concerning guilt eclipses shame, establishes an important step in unveiling how shame has unintended yet deleterious effects. While

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[10] Recent research has shown that emotional and affective distinctions between guilt and shame hold across all or most cultures, whether western or eastern, even while the triggering events of shame or guilt differ by culture, see Seger Breugelmans and Ype H. Poortinga, "Emotion without a word: Shame and Guilt with Rarámuri Indians and Rural Javanese," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91 (2006): 1111-1122.

[11] Early work to reveal shame began with sociologist Ruth Benedict's distinctions of societies as either shame cultures or guilt cultures see *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (New York: Meridian Books, 1946). See also Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (1993; reprint Berkeley: University of California Press: 2008); Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models of Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Jacob Neusner, *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clarke Kee* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); David Konstan, "Shame in Ancient Greece," *Social Research* 70, no. 4 (2003): 1031-1060; David Kovacs, "Shame, Pleasure, and Honor in Phaedra's Great Speech (Euripides, Hippolytus 375-87)," *The American Journal of Philology* 101, no. 3 (1980): 287-303; Charles Segal, "Shame and Purity in Euripides' Hippolytus," *Hermes* 98, no. 3 (1970): 278-99; J.T. Hooker, "Homeric Society: A Shame Culture?" *Greece & Rome* 34, no. 2 (1987): 121-25; Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th-18th Centuries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

often obscured, shame surfaces within a field of exposure, often either severing or indicating attachment. In order to repair its toxicity, shame must be uncovered, faced, and addressed. Shame is not simply something to be overcome by positive affect or eradicated by treatment modalities, as it exposes the self at its most vulnerable; that is, socially in relationship to another person, and theologically to God.

A rich analytical engagement between discourses of shame as they relate to the body in the Christian tradition, grounded in both the psychological and philosophical conceptions of affect theory, discerns and disentangles guilt and other affects from the often accompanying but distinct affect of shame, embedded but generally ignored in Christian rhetoric. In addition, considering the intimate language of touch inherent in Christian practice draws the body further into the discussion of shame. Tracing the relationship between shame and touch, especially focusing on touch of the face where affect initially emerges, draws out the potential of touch to disinter shame. Ultimately, I examine how the affect of shame functions, if often unconsciously, by demonstrating the potential power that theology has over such bodies, contributing to still growing areas of theological discourse, affect theory, trauma studies, and literary studies.

## Significance of the Problem

### Dominance of Guilt in Christian Anthropologies

The Christian tradition and the Western world in general routinely focus on guilt as a response to wrongdoing. Guilt relates theologically to sin, remorse, penance, and

forgiveness.[12] But shame is often subsumed under or concealed by these terms in theological language. Thus, theological discourse, widely accepted or renowned traditional Christian texts, and Christian practice fold shame into rhetoric about guilt thereby obscuring the impact of shame, concealing its effects, and so forming "shamed" bodies. Religious discourse about sin, guilt, and reparation – that the Christian gains his/her greatest fulfillment in being empathetic and selfless while he/she is also sinful– produces a paradoxical character.[13] The most apparent impetus of this character appears to be guilt; however, guilt in this situation is confused with unconsciously interred shame.

Confusing shame with guilt in language and practices around sin compounds the paradoxical character, while exclusive focus on guilt ignores the experience of shame and prohibits healing from shame's detrimental effects.[14] The continual eclipsing of shame, buried by language about guilt and sin, leads in effect to the perpetuation of shame itself and its damaging evolution into withdrawal and violence since it remains present yet disregarded.[15] Shame and guilt remain undistinguished in different types of theological

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[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality,* trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998).

[13] I use the word character to describe the self to avoid the limitations and inflexibility inherent in the idea of identity. Furthermore, "identity" presumes a more rigid categorization of the self, whereas character presumes some nature of the self that performed, alterable, and in process.

[14] Helen Block Lewis, "Introduction," in *The Role of Shame in Symptom Formation,* ed. Helen Block Lewis (London: Psychology Press, 1987), 18. Lewis claims that fusing shame and guilt confuses them.

[15] One of the more poignant examples relates to the term "survivor guilt" as a component of moral injury. Recently discarded by the DSM classifications, as reported in Jonathan R. T. Davidson and Edna B. Foa, eds., *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: DSM-IV and Beyond* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1993), 92, "survivor guilt" has been categorized as a component of PTSD; shame, not guilt, is related to PTSD symptoms. Thus, survivor guilt is not guilt but shame as a consequence of having lived when others have died. See also Judith Lewis Herman, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as a Shame Disorder," in *Shame in the Therapy Hour*, ed. Ronda L. Dearing and June Price Tangney (Washington, DC: American

language. Revealing how this occurs, while also showing how other languaging conceals shame, not only exposes where shame operates as maladaptive, but also discloses how shame figures in attachment and bonding. This duality in shame, that shame both impedes and fosters attachment, along with its propensity to operate deleteriously in the self, illustrates the need for a more distinct theology of shame.

The recent developments in affect theory prompts me to consider how Christian language confuses and conflates shame, guilt, and other affective experiences configuring "shamed" bodies, thereby interfering with attachment. After establishing shame's powerful role as an affect, I focus on examples from two theological texts known for their defense of the Christian faith and development of theological anthropology. The first passage by Saint Augustine (354-430) historically precedes and influences the second passage by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971). Then, I turn to the moment in the Christian liturgy in which touch and shame intertwine in the Ash Wednesday practice of imposing ashes on the forehead.

In Christian theology, Augustine and Niebuhr assume roles as master diagnosticians of the human condition, and their widely known works on Christian ethics, composed at two pivotal moments in Christian history, are significant for this study. Both talk about sin, guilt, and shame, criticizing what shame theorists identify as unhealthy pride. Their theological platforms offer rich ways to think about how shame is consciously or unconsciously interred in the body, often functioning to sever connections.

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Psychological Association, 2011). In this essay, Herman shows parallels between the experience of shame and trauma aligned with current DSM V categories of post-traumatic stress and dissociative disorders.

The study of shame in and through their highly significant and influential works is important for rethinking the theological meaning of shame in the current context.

The textual analysis begins with Augustine. His idea of congenital sinfulness has become normative for Catholic and Protestant theology. In one interpretation of Augustine, human nature has been so distorted by the biblical Fall that humans are born both sinful and incapable of anything but sin. In Augustine's view, evil is a product of sin, and sin's root is pride. Augustine claims that pride represents the desire to elevate oneself to the place of God and the inclination to deny one's status as a creature under God. In this view, at the center of a corrupt natural order, which erupts from the order of paradise after the Fall, lies a helpless, sinful, and shamed humanity disconnected from God. However, alternate readings of Augustine illustrate that he promotes an intimate, passionate, and visceral connection with and attachment to God above all else.[16] Highlighting the concept of attuned attachment to God fundamental to Augustine's theological anthropology bears significance for analysis because of affect theory and the revival of attachment studies in trauma. Augustine has a unique reading of shame that incorporates shame's biological function with its social role of connecting the Christian self to the Christian community. Thus, Augustine's rhetoric constructs a Christian self in ways that will be useful for showing how shame becomes interred and subsequently how shame becomes repaired through intimate relating and secure attachments.

Niebuhr's sense of sin also starts with humanity's condition, and although the context is different than Augustine's (he was a Christian realist responding to World War

[16] Virginia Burrus, Mark D. Jordan, and Karmen MacKendrick, eds., *Seducing Augustine: Bodies, Desires, Confessions* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

II), his sense of sin is also central to the Christian self. For Niebuhr, sin occurs as the result of a tension between the possibilities of human freedom, or self-transcendence, and the constraints of finitude, or humanity's limitations and dependence on nature. Anxiety caused by human finitude leads people to try to secure their existence. Humans, made in the image of God, but paradoxically creatures of the natural world, struggle for ascendency in freedom. This freedom not only distinguishes humanity from nature and raises humans up beyond animals, but also allows humanity to attempt escape of finitude, disregarding God. Niebuhr retains Augustine's emphasis on sin as a consequence of freedom, where sin illustrates humanity's desire to be powerful, rejecting God in ambition and pride. Insecurity and anxiety about finitude precedes the sins of pride (self-deification) and sensuality (the deification of another). Niebuhr presents humanity as participating in the sin of pride, characterized by excessive and inordinate self-love, defying finitude in "unbounded desire," or as participating in the sin of sensuality, escaping or losing the self. Both facilitate an escape from finitude.[17]

When referring to self-deification or deification of another, Niebuhr uses two images: 1) the individual puffed up in pride conveying "unbounded desire," 2) the other as God, or the self as absorbed by the other, revealing the escape from or loss of the self. These images of humanity in sin correspond to the two poles of shame articulated by Donald L. Nathanson of outward violence and inward withdrawal.[18] For Niebuhr, pride facilitates these postures and, inherent in the Christian self, signifies humanity's effort to

[17] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man Volume I: Human Nature* (1943; reprint, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 185 and 283.

[18] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 24.

assuage anxiety about mortality and finitude. Niebuhr's writing focuses on guilt and desires reparation of pride. His diagnosis of the human condition in pride hovers so closely to an understanding of shame, yet shame goes unnamed. The realism and justice he advocates cannot be fully entered into by a Christian in shame; shame must be drawn out and faced to disallow for interpretations of his work that ultimately lead to shame's interment.

Following the textual analysis, I examine an event in Christian practice in which shame and the Christian narrative intertwine at the moment of touch: the imposition of ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday signifies a memory of the Edenic narrative, interpreted in both Augustine and Niebuhr, and Christ's body. I center on the moment of touch as an affective encounter, drawing attention to the haptic in Christian practice especially insofar as shame, guilt, and sin collide at the moment the ashes touch the forehead, and even more significantly, when an officiate makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the faithful marking them as penitent. This especially intimate contact has implications both for acknowledging the Christian self, as a shamed self, and for the success of the Christian intent to join Christians together in mortification with the promise of renewal. The continual return in the practice to this event connotes interior conversion and restoration, goals it cannot achieve if shame remains interred.

## The Significance of Shame Studies

Although interdisciplinary studies of shame, including work by pastoral theologians and pastoral psychologists, reveal shame's deleterious effects, constructive

theologians have been largely absent from these studies. Most theological literature on shame neglects to discern the subtleties between shame and guilt.[19] Theological literature typically considers shame either as a psychological malady or as a result of the traditional Christian damnation of the body originating in the Fall. When disease and damnation are the starting points for a text on shame, the primary aim of the author is often to address ways that pastoral theologians can treat shame to help people overcome or defeat it.[20] I move away from notions that shame be overcome, defeated, even healed if that means its eradication and instead, press a need for shame to be faced and accepted.

New research on affect and trauma confirms the need to challenge dominant theological conceptions and/or articulations of guilt and shame, especially those that encourage the elimination of shame or promise salvific healing from the affect. Although toxic levels of shame, which manifest, for instance, as low estimations of self-worth impeding development and attachment, addictive behaviors, character disorders, and/or psychosomatic illnesses, might be remedied, shame itself as a natural phenomenon cannot be healed in the sense of being eliminated. Rather, shame must be disinterred so that it can be tolerated and regulated by the self to serve its biological objective of social regulation and connection. The unique role that shame plays biologically includes

[19] Trends in recent, less academic, theological literature focus on how grace and the redemptive cross offer restoration from shame. See Rodin Stockitt, *Restoring the Shamed: Toward a Theology of Shame* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012); Edward T. Welch, *Shame Interrupted: How God Lifts the Pain of Worthlessness and Rejection* (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2012), and David F. Allen, *Shame: The Human Nemesis* (Bahamas: Eleuthera Publications, 2010).

[20] Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

delimiting the self while pointing to the need of repairing broken attachment bonds and reconnecting with the other to restore the relationship.[21]

Studies of shame outside of theology are extensive and expanding. Drawing on several arenas that deepen and broaden an analysis of shame provides multiple angles for theological engagement. The first arena is affect theory.[22] The study of affect represents an attempt to account for the ways in which individuals come to know the world, theorizing not only the body but also the body's capacity to act and be acted upon. Accounting for the very material engagements that inform human life, affect theorists acknowledge that people learn bodily. Thus, affect theory is a way of theorizing this relationship between the body and the mind differently from the Enlightenment's epistemological idea of the split between mind and body.

Emerging out of a collection of concerns about the perceived limits of critical theories indebted to psychoanalytic and Freudian theory, affect theory critiques therapeutic "talking cures"[23] and expands into the natural sciences to ground a more body

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[21] Silvan Tomkins, "Shame," in *The Many Faces of Shame*, ed. Donald L. Nathanson (New York: Guilford, 1987), 144; Schore, *Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self*, 152-171.

[22] See Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) and *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

[23] The "talking cure" emerges out of the famous case study of Anna O. presented by Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer in *Studies of Hysteria*, trans. James Strachey (1955; New York: Basic Books, 2000), 30. The term emerges during analysis conducted by Breuer with Anna O.; she mentions the use of the "talking cure," or what she calls the "chimney sweep," as her process of verbalization after being hypnotized. Freud describes what is developed into a technique as "sweeping the mind clean" through continual verbalization, which potentially reveals unconscious content thereby enabling recovery from

based theoretical approach. Affect theorists' renewed interest in the "biological portion of emotion"[24] places emphasis on bodily experiences and recognizes the relationship of an affect to its object.[25] Affects are understood to be participating in an "ongoing process" that enlarges experience contributing to self-formation.[26] In her work, Patricia Clough recognizes an "affective turn" in humanities scholarship which she states, "invites a transdisciplinary approach to theory and method" necessary to theorizing the social, blurring the lines between the organic and the inorganic and inserting the technical into the body's capacity to "affect and be affected."[27] In affect, no category of being is delimited; the body and what is organic comes into contact with other matter or material, and the experience of every meeting contributes to how a person comes to understand the world. As a student of comparative literature and theology, I examine affect theorists' commitment to explicating the interchange between the material and human life. Shame plays a part in this interchange, and consideration of shame as a bodily affect upon which theology makes an impact is critical to the premise that interred shame functions in the formation of the Christian self.

Shame functions as an internal, visceral affect, which, according to Silvan Tomkins, constitutes a muscular glandular response located throughout the body

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presented symptoms in psychoanalysis. See Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), 8.

[24] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride,* 49.

[25] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 99-101. Sedgwick differentiates drives in psychoanalytic theory from affects. Either a drive is operating, or it is not; affects allow for more possibilities than "on and off."

[26] Gregg and Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader*, 5.

[27] Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social,* 2-3.

triggered at subcortical centers.[28] According to Tomkins, this physiological response originates when a child is seven months old and manifests when a child's emotive response is met by displeasure from the caregiver, functioning as an auxiliary affect to interest/excitement.[29] The observable response occurs when interest-excitement has been partially truncated and may entail one or some combination of the following: a bowed head, averted gaze, blushing, and other behaviors that signify hiding.[30] Further, shame extends beyond simple cognitive classifications; therefore, it can neither be simply talked or reasoned through nor eradicated. Instead, ameliorating shame demands disinterment by allowing the self to be seen and exposed so as to foster the repair of broken connection. The influence of Christian rhetoric that corroborates the behaviors inherent in the shame response of hiding impedes this repair. The imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday presents a moment in which attachment through touch can be accessed: interred or maladaptive shame prevents this potential connection.

Viewing shame through the lens of affect theory also clarifies for theology the important distinctions between guilt and shame. Even though Tomkins and Nathanson associate the initial affective experience of guilt with shame, shame can be distinguished from guilt based on action, location, and rates of repair. Guilt generally does not have the

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[28] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 135.

[29] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, eds., *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2005), 6, and Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 120-135.

[30] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 141. See also Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 141; Block Lewis, *"Introduction,"* 17; Judith Lewis Herman, "Shattered Shame States and their Repair," Presented at The John Bowlby Memorial Lecture, Saturday March 10, 2007: 5.

deleterious effects of shame.[31] In addition, guilt results from wrong action, as an emotional response to a mistake or wrongdoing, whereas shame implies no standard of comparison that comes with having done something wrong or right. Instead, shame is internalized as some wrong inherent in the self. Shame points inward and is interred, while guilt points outward to an act. Therefore, guilt can be repaired more easily than shame.[32] However, unaddressed or acknowledged guilt turns into shame, while shame unaddressed turns into more shame, or violence.[33]

The second arena of relevant literature includes trauma studies situated at the juncture of psychoanalysis and literary theory. Trauma theorists, such as Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman, expand terms like guilt and shame by bringing them into the realm of rhetoric and literary theory. This approach suggests that, "psychoanalysis and literary analysis are two different contexts for similar methodological insights."[34] While the former negotiates the contents of the psyche, the latter investigates the elements of the text. Both approaches explore and reveal multiple layers of meaning. Although examples of this style vary, a core assumption stands, situated at the intersection of psychoanalysis

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[31] See Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 141.

[32] Michael Lewis asserts that simple acts like apologizing assuage guilt, while shame generally requires therapeutic intervention, see *Shame: The Exposed Self* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 75-77.

[33] James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996). 110-114; Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 3, 5, and 163-5.

[34] Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 19.

and literary theory: the psyche and literature, including rhetoric, language, and style, intertwine.[35]

In recent decades, the development of trauma studies, an interesting collusion of psychoanalysis and literary theory, has motivated theologians to address how theology accounts for trauma's destruction of persons and communities, while also challenging theologians to respond to trauma and surrounding debates in a more robust way.[36] In terms of shame, trauma theorists link the affect with withdrawal or violence, which manifests in the responses of either burying memories, denying pain, hiding from the world, or lashing out at others.[37] Studies carried out by trauma theorists have challenged theologians to consider how theological rhetoric fails to respond to the internalizing of shame caused by trauma, thereby further shaping "shamed" bodies, often initially shaped by trauma.

The literature that composes the third arena relates to *habitus* and the findings of neuropsychological and somatic research that show how shame becomes interred in the body and that this interment is destructive.[38] Gender theorist Elspeth Probyn argues that

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[35] Céline Surprenant, "Freud and Psychoanalysis," in *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 200.

[36] See Kathleen M. Sands, *Escape from Paradise: Evil and Tragedy in Feminist Theology* (New York: Fortress Press, 1994); Jennifer Beste, *God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, and Forgiveness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 1999); Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009); Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

[37] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt,* 105; Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 56 and 189; Lenore Terr, *Too Scared to Cry: How Trauma Affects Children and Ultimately Us All* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 62-63, and 113; Gilligan, *Violence*, 111.

[38] See Schore, *Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self*, and Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, and Consciousness*.

shame plays more than a social or cognitive role in human relationships, or it would be easily eradicated; instead, shame represents a particular *habitus*.[39] She refers to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which both constructs a world and is inscribed on the body.[40] Bourdieu's research provides a way to consider an analysis of shame as a *habitus*, inscribed and interred through practice.[41] Building on Bourdieu's work, textual analysis of the passages by St. Augustine and Niebuhr, along with an investigation into the moment of touch on Ash Wednesday, demonstrates how rhetoric contributes to the formation of a paradoxical self, illustrating the Christian tradition's participation in creating "shamed" bodies.[42]

The idea of *habitus* as dependent on memory relates to the idea that shame responses repeat and emerge in an interminable spiral. Helen Block Lewis calls this spiral shame's bodily interment as physiological and embodied responses to stimuli.[43] The experience of shame contributes to additional shame or rage: shame for feeling shame, or rage at feeling shame; each response elicits further shame. The spiral of shame,[44]

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[39] Elspeth Probyn, "Shame in the Habitus," in *The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 245.

[40] Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Polity Press, 2000).

[41] "The Baltimore Catechism," The Baltimore Catechism Revised Edition (1941), accessed August 15, 2014, http://www.catholicity.com/baltimore-catechism/; "Mass: Ash Wednesday," accessed August 15, 2014, http://www.liturgies.net/Lent/ashwednesdayrc.htm.

[42] Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 14.17; Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 251-60.

[43] Block Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis*, 66.

[44] The shame spiral is expanded in Thomas J. Scheff, "The Shame-Rage Spiral: A Case Study of an Interminable Quarrel," in *The Role of Shame in Symptom Formation,* edited by Helen Block Lewis (London: Psychology Press, 1987), 109-149.

neglected in theological literature that focuses on guilt, further illustrates shame as a *habitus*. My analysis seeks to show that theological discourse often exchanges guilt for shame, fusing or conflating them. Equating guilt with shame minimizes the effects of shame, further enabling its bodily interment and perpetual repetition.[45]

Christian discourse that eclipses shame with talk of guilt and sin in association with corresponding images is especially problematic in light of the negative physiological effects of shame on the body. According to Rosemary S. L. Mills, the experiences of shame induce or encourage a rise in cortisol and proinflamatory cytokine activity in the body.[46] This rise in levels of bodily chemicals negatively impacts the immune system and disenables maximal functioning.[47] Shame produces stress on the body, inhibiting the immune system from protecting the body from external pathogens and interfering with positive affect, which directs attachment. This physiological response to shame increases the intensity of the shame affect especially in cases of trauma where the body's natural response to extreme stress is magnified. As psychologist Judith Herman explains, the experience of shame is a "biologically stressful" event that acts like a sudden "brake" to an excited emotional state.[48] Typically, it stifles excitement in a form of hypo-arousal resulting in bodily postures that signal submissiveness, defeat, or withdrawal – bodily

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[45] James Gilligan, "Shame, Guilt, and Violence," *Social Research* 70, no. 4 (2003): 1165.

[46] Rosemary S.L. Mills, "Taking Stock of the Developmental Literature on Shame," *Developmental Review* 25 (2005): 52.

[47] Sally S. Dickerson, Tara L. Gruenewald, and Margaret E. Kemeny, "When the Social Self is Threatened: Shame, Physiology, and Health," *Journal of Personality* 72, no. 6 (December 2004): 1197 – 1204.

[48] Herman, "Shattered Shame States," 6.

positions that primates also assume to signify acquiescence such as slumped shoulders, averted gaze, and bowed down head.[49]

Through the lens of affect theory, along with work in trauma studies, I delve into the texts and praxis to discover what they reveal about shame. By challenging shame's interment, I uncover where shame is concealed to interfere with the original role shame plays as a moderator of social bonding. I investigate theological rhetoric's power to shape shamed bodies and consider theology a critical conversation partner in the dialogue about shame, especially insofar as theologians like Augustine and Niebuhr have shaped the theological discourse and anthropologies that undergird Christian theology and practice.

## Method of Investigation

### Textual Study

A detailed examination of selected theological texts provides the heart of my analysis in this dissertation, and it draws from a variety of disciplines to better understand the dynamics of shame. While focusing on Christian texts, emphasis falls on the rhetorical analysis of texts within the Christian tradition that have played and continue to play a key role in shaping the Christian character. Although a division is often made between the role and impact of text and practice, as a practical theologian, I interpret this "shaping"/formation in a more robust way. Theology's messages about sin and guilt impede a cognitive understanding of shame because shame often goes unaddressed. Thus, shame remains clouded by rhetoric about guilt and sin. However, theology

[49] Dickerson, Gruenewald, and Kemeny, "When the Social Self is Threatened," 1196.

communicates, directly or indirectly, that shame exists on and in bodies. Further, theological discourse, through the implication of the Christian as a lonely sinner, isolates the Christian in a posture of sin and shame, dismissing the possibility of repair since such restoration depends on reconnection. Finally, theology intends for an empathetic connection, which impeded by shame, cannot be achieved if shame remains interred in the self, in and on bodies. By disentangling the rhetoric of guilt and sin from shame in each text, I pursue the idea that this rhetoric serves to inter the affect of shame, thus perpetuating the formation of "shamed" bodies.

Viewing shame through the lens of affect theory, I show what is at stake in theological conflation of guilt, sin, and shame. Theology must negotiate categories of shame as visceral, affective, and neurological. I navigate these categories first through an examination of St. Augustine's *City of God*, Book 14, Chapter 17, to show how language about sin, guilt, and shame form the Christian self by burying shame in the body and marking the body with shame. Then, I consider Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man Volume I: Human Nature*, primarily pages 251-60, to comprise a deeper analysis of the language of pride and sensuality as sins that incur, inter, and deeply repress shame, rejecting it for other terms including anxiety and insecurity. Niebuhr diagnoses shame as part of the human condition never using the term "shame" but eliding it with other terms.

In the second part of my analysis, I consider the moment of touch at the imposition of ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday. Touch provides an opportunity for a deep analysis of the confluence of shame, guilt, and sin in practice while

demonstrating the potential to disinter shame through haptic means. Considering the language of liturgy as an event through writing, which theologian Dirk Lange states, "has inscribed within it the complex possibilities of the story it is relating,"[50] I expose the moment of touch as a collusion of the past and present in the Christian tradition at the location of the forehead. This moment of touch represents an affective encounter that potentially reveals and accepts shame as a constructive part of the Christian self.

## Practical Theology

Understanding the role of language and rhetoric as formative to the Christian self is a primary assumption of this thesis and the starting point for my analysis. Essentially both written texts, specifically Augustine's and Niebuhr's, and liturgical language function, as practical theologian Casparus Vos asserts, metaphorically, "while contributing to spiritual formation."[51] Keeping both Christian texts and liturgical events in focus, I show that each contributes to the formation of a Christian self. A textual, rhetorical analysis of shame through the lens of affect theory supports this assumption.

Beneath the theoretical assumption that theological texts and moments in liturgical practice serve a metaphorical function lies an additional presupposition that unconscious processes motivate behavior. My analysis consistently seeks to understand not only how shame is embedded within texts and rhetoric about guilt and sin, but also

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[50] Dirk G. Lange, *Trauma Recalled: Liturgy, Disruption, and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 22. Lange's analysis of Luther's writing, informed by trauma theory, provides a useful model as it opens up new ways to understand liturgy.

[51] Casparus Vos, "Liturgical Language as Metaphorical Language: A Contribution to Spirituality and the Public Realm," in *Pathways to the Public Square: Practical Theology in an Age of Pluralism,* Elaine L. Graham and Anna Rowlands, eds. (Lit Verlag: Munster, 2005), 303.

how shame, as an affect, becomes interred in bodies. Trauma theorists and affect theorists recognize distinctions between conscious processes – those that lie within awareness – and unconscious processes – those that lie outside of awareness. When what is unconscious conflicts with what is conscious, *dis*-ease results. As I presume different levels operating within the psyche evidenced by conscious and unconscious processes related to shame, I also presume multiple levels of meaning occurring in discourse.

My theoretical assumptions result in an analytical method that aligns with psychoanalytic and hermeneutic practices of disclosure as a means of exposing and recovering what Elaine Graham calls "the unvoiced and repressed dimensions of experience."[52] Part of this process of exposition includes evaluations and challenges of the "sources and norms" often established by theological texts and scripture that impose a "unitary identity."[53] To do this effectively within the tradition requires a re-reading of the past developed by Christian texts and traditions, analyzing how tradition shapes the Christian self and Christian practice. As Graham asserts, only after analysis of texts and traditions can lost voices be reclaimed and different realities be imagined.

The core pre-commitments (psychoanalytic and hermeneutic) that permeate Graham's work in *Transforming Practice,* and which I also bring to my theological analysis, are not foreign to literature and theology. Recognizing the importance of analysis that bridges these disciplines, while tracing textual patterns that emerge and reveal levels of meaning not apparent on the surface, illustrates a contribution of

[52] Elaine Graham, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty* (1996; reprint Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 193.

[53] Graham, *Transforming Practice*, 9; see also Elaine Graham, "A Remembrance of Things (Best) Forgotten: the 'Allegorical Past' and the Feminist Imagination," *Feminist Theology* 20, no. 1 (2012), 59.

psychoanalysis and literary theory to theology. This manifests in what Heather Walton considers the investigation of the validity of "the concept of the rational, unitary and stable self from which all else in humanist thinking gains its bearings."[54]

Therefore, I read for what messages lie hidden in language, for what words signify beyond their literal or even symbolic meaning, and for what lies outside of awareness. Thus, I approach theological analysis with pre-commitments or theoretical assumptions when considering written, verbal, and non-verbal communication through a hermeneutic lens. I assume that layers of meaning operate within Christian discourse, and most specifically within the texts that are the focus of my analysis. This approach integrates the concerns of trauma theory with practical theological analysis, as I apply particular insights and methods of trauma studies to the reading of theological texts and practice.

## Sources of the Study

Several bodies of literature that represent the intersections at the heart of this work serve as the sources for this investigation: primary theological texts; shame studies including affect theory and trauma studies; and studies that consider theological anthropology as it manifests in Christian formation and body theologies.

Silvan Tomkins' and Helen Block Lewis's work on shame is foundational. Their early research on shame as an affect distinguishes shame from guilt.[55] Although other

[54] Heather Walton, "Re-Visioning the Subject in Literature and Theology," in *Self/Same/Other: Re-Visioning the Subject in Literature and Theology,* Heather Walton and Andrew W. Hass eds., (London: T&T Clark, 2000), 13.

branches of psychology began to write about shame during the late-twentieth century, many referring to Sigmund Freud's less direct work on shame (often articulated in terms of guilt),[56] my focus on affect theory, shame related to the body, and shame related to trauma continually returns focus to shame's biological, visceral, and neurological functioning. Donald Nathanson and literary critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have contributed to more recent research on shame and affect theory both expanding on Tomkins work into the fields of psychology and literary theory respectively. Work on shame also emerges in much literature on trauma theory where shame correlates with PTSD symptoms, dissociation, bonds with the perpetrator, secrecy about traumatic experience, and failed efforts at attachment.[57]

The return to rhetoric to think about how it shapes Christian bodies, as mentioned, requires use of scholarship both by and inspired by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. These scholars direct my reading of the primary theological sources and their ideas underlie my theoretical approach. Work by theologians who consider how the Christian tradition approaches and negotiates bodies furthers my analysis of texts and their formation of bodies. Mark D. Jordan's theological anthropology and analysis of the construction of the Christian self serve as a model to this end, along with the work of Marcella Althaus-Reid, Lisa Isherwood, Elisabeth Stuart, Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, and

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[55] Block Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis,* 15-18.

[56] See primarily Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (1920; reprint, W.W. New York: Norton and Company, 1990) and Freud's later *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (1929; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton, 1962).

[57] Herman, "Shattered Shame States," 11 and 13; see also Léon Wurmser, *Torment Me, But Don't Abandon Me* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

Graham Ward.[58] In addition, literature that considers Christian practices and the body is growing and has value both methodologically and in the consideration of the shamed body in this dissertation. Karmen MacKendrick, Jean Luc Nancy, Virginia Burrus, and Martha Mount Shoop have also contributed to this genre.[59]

## Limitations of Study

The specific focus and contribution of this project rely on the effort to reveal shame in traditional Christian discourse, showing how shame's interment in the body limits and even impedes Christian ideals of reparation and restoration in community. This focus necessarily precludes some literature about shame. Research on shame has started to expand across disciplinary divides; however, my study focuses on the scholarship emerging from the fields of affect theory, psychology, trauma studies, and theology. Affect theory in both its psychological and philosophical conceptions frames my approach to an analysis of shame and its impact. The scope of my research does not include some anthropological and sociological research on the topic. The former would draw in a history too complex for this work, while the latter introduces a vocabulary

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[58] Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Lisa Isherwood and Elizabeth Stuart eds., *Introducing Body Theology: Introductions in Feminist Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 1998); Ludger H. Viefhues-Bailey, *Beyond the Philosopher's Fear: A Cavellian Reading of Gender, Origin and Religion in Modern Skepticism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007); Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), and *Christ and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

[59] Karmen MacKendrick, *The Word Made Skin* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004) and *Fragmentation and Memory*; Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); Virginia Burrus, *Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Marcia W. Mount-Shoop, *Let the Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

situated around organizations and institutions distracting from a focus that necessarily considers the diagnosis of an individual according to rhetoric and words. For instance, I do not address the empirical studies that followed Ruth Benedict's work and extended her notion of "shame culture" to other Asian cultures.[60] This line of analysis also contributes to the growing body of theological literature on shame and pastoral care from multi-cultural perspective that deserves a more robust analysis in future projects.[61] This dissertation's work, limited to the Western Christian context, draws on multi-cultural references to delineate shame experiences, but it will not make suggestions for treatment modalities in pastoral care.[62] Furthermore, while my research draws from scholars on race, gender, and religion it focuses more on these at the service of affect theory.[63] In

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[60] Ying Wong and Jeanne Tsai, "Cultural Models of Shame and Guilt" in *The Self-Conscious Emotions: Theory and Research,* eds. Jessica L. Tracy, Richard W. Robins, and June Price Tangney (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 209. Francis Inki Ha, "Shame in Asian and Western Cultures," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 38, no. 8 (1995): 1114 -1131.

[61] Jacob Hee Cheol Lee, "Shame and Pastoral Care: Implications from an Asian Theological Perspective," *Pastoral Psychology* 57 (2009): 253-262, 254. See also You, "Shame and Guilt Mechanisms in East Asian Cultures," Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006); Boyung Lee, "Caring-Self and Women's Self Esteem: A Feminist Reflection on Pastoral Care and Religious Education of Korean-American Women," *Pastoral Psychology* 54 (2006): 337-53; Neil Pembroke, *The Art of Listening: Dialogue, Shame, and Pastoral Care* (New York: T&T Clark/Handsel Press, 2002).

[62] The following texts exceed the white American context to represent shame: *Grace Cho, Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Salman Rushdie, *Shame: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 1983) where the narrator of the novel asserts on page 22, "Shame, dear reader, is not the exclusive property of the East;" Jasvinder Sanghera, *Shame* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007); K.E. Supriya, *Shame and Recovery: Mapping Identity in an Asian Women's Shelter* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

[63] See Joy DeGruy Leary, *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Baltimore: Uptown Press, 2005); Anthony B. Pinn and Dwight N. Hopkins, eds., *Loving the Body: Black Religious Studies and the Erotic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Freedom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); Kathryn Bond Stockton, *Beautiful Bottom, Beautiful Shame: Where "Black" Meets "Queer"* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*

addition, my definition of shame does not completely capture the work done in social psychologies and psychologies of the self.

A further limitation emerges in the textual selections made for this dissertation. Christian liturgy has a variety of and many examples where guilt, sin, and shame converge. However the texts selected both assert a theological anthropology within the same intellectual history, where Augustine's claim serves as the basis. In fact, a consideration of Augustine is critical to the study as his theology undergirds so much of what emerges in contemporary considerations of the body. Importantly, I analyze Augustine's and Niebuhr's contributions specifically in terms of affect theory and shame. In addition, I am working from the representative passages by Augustine and Niebuhr, while not trying to do an exhaustive study of their corpus. However, my purpose is to provide insights into their analyses of the human person.

The shame experience signifies an important phenomenon in human life and deserves more attention by theologians at multi-disciplinary intersections. Misdiagnosing shame, as I argue happens too frequently in theological anthropologies, sets up serious problems for the Christian self and self-formation, as shame lies at the root of pathologies, physical problems, and the ever-growing issue of violence. Shame acts as a motivator of violent behavior, but it is also key in forming secure attachments within the Christian community and to God. Theological anthropologies that address shame in this

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(New York: Orbis Books, 1999); Erica L. Johnson and Patricia Moran, *The Female Face of Shame* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Patrick Moore, *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004); Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael, *Coming Out of Shame* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).

way will take a significant step towards the inhibition of violent behavior directed towards the self and towards others.

## CHAPTER TWO

## INTERPRETING SHAME AFFECTIVELY

*Blazons of shame, the "fallen face" with eyes down and head averted – and to a lesser extent, the blush – are semaphores of trouble and at the same time of a desire to reconstitute the interpersonal bridge.*[1]

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick

Facial displays announce the shame experience. Cast down eyes or reddened cheeks corporeally signal withdrawal or the longing for reconnection to that from whom the face turned away in the first place. As an affect, shame stimulates such responses, signifying the physiological and visceral engagement of a body with stimuli when perceived by a real or imagined other. The idea of a corporeally expressed affective shame establishes the grounds from which to consider how shame operates in theological anthropologies: that shame originating in the body can become interred in the body. Interment occurs because shame's immediacy and potentially negative intensity inspires a conscious or unconscious judgment that the self, or part of the self, is corrupt. This judgment takes place through the eyes of a real or imagined other. The painful experience of feeling exposed in shame often results in shame's denial. This unarticulated or unexpressed shame becomes effectively interred in the self, where unaddressed, confounded, and even repressed, shame interred still powerfully shapes behavior and bodies. Theology participates in this shaping by shame when shame escapes its view and thus becomes concealed by other affects. Yet, shame's concealment belies its ubiquity; it

[1] Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touch Feeling*, 36.

is a shared human experience, and when faced, or consciously acknowledged, shame provides significant meaning for the self and for the self in relation to others.

The positive, negative, and cumulative effects of shame in the body provoke my approach to shame, my interest in the theological implications of shame, and my argument that shame has a role in theological notions of what constitutes the human. Examining shame through the lens of affect theory, as a branch of psychological and philosophical thought, while distinguishing shame from other experiential affects, I address the power that these affects have in self-formation to disentangle shame from the rhetoric and practice that evade it. Forming an affective theology of shame provides a pathway that leads to its disinterment from the self. To this end, I will focus on aspects of shame that emerge in the specific theological writings and practice that I analyze.

Formulating an affective theology of shame includes assuming that the body, a source of flowing and changing energy, has the capacity to act on and be acted upon by the world, in this case constituted by Christian tradition and practice. In analyzing the body, a spotlight on affect allows, as Elizabeth Wissinger writes, "more than an analysis of discourses, meaning systems, and the social construction of the body; it also allows for an analysis of the dynamism of the body's matter."[2] Mediating social relationships, the body serves both as the affective center of life and, shaped by the stimulation of particular affects, as a site of energy flow where shame plays a central role. The condition of shame as biological fosters its visceral interment, supporting the ways in which shame

[2] Elizabeth Wissinger, "Always on Display: Affective Production in the Modeling Industry," in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, ed. Patricia Clough (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 232.

becomes buried in the self. Yet, thus interred, shame still influences the self and behavior. Additionally, dysregulated shame damages the self and others.[3]

This chapter traces important developments in affect theory and locates the body at the core of the study. Attending to the presence of affect in an interdisciplinary way, primarily within psychology, biology, neuroscience, philosophy, and critical theory, supports an integration of shame with theological analysis. A more nuanced consideration of affect follows, allowing for greater discernment of shame, including how it is activated and interred in the body. Since perceiving shame poses a distinct challenge, I provide markers of shame that point to its physiology, including how it combines with and modulates other affects;[4] the conflation of shame with other affects contributes to the difficulty in both identifying and naming shame. Thus, analyzing shame necessitates distilling it from both its stimulus and other affects, especially delineating it from the experience of guilt.[5] By drawing out the biological nature of shame, including its

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[3] Dysregulation is generally a psychological term used to describe emotions or affects that do not fall within a specific range, but it has become more recently employed by Alan Schore in *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*. Much scholarship is currently being conducted in the area of attachment, within and outside of affect theory, although Nathanson argues that since attachment involves affect regulation, the two cannot be separated, see *Pride and Shame*, 217-235. Research has also been conducted by Janina Fisher on attachment, affect regulation and dysregulation, and attunement, see "Sensorimotor Approaches to Trauma Treatment," *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 17, no. 3 (2011).

[4] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 61 and 73.

[5] Work on distinguishing guilt from shame has been done extensively through various analytic or theoretical approaches. Since I am viewing guilt and shame through the affect theory, I draw from Tomkins, who does not distinctly call guilt an affect, although he includes it under the umbrella of the shame-humiliation affect, stating that each marks different experiences, aligning guilt with morality, see *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 351. Nathanson follows Tomkins, aligning guilt with morality and distinguishing it from an affect per se in that it is released by a confessional system, see *Pride and Shame*, 19; Schore asserts that more research tracing the ontogenetic course of shame needs to be conducted, but that shame and guilt can be distinguished presently ontogenetically, see *Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self*, 151. I will continually distinguish them throughout this project based on somatic consequence of each, aligned cognitive process, ontogeny, and repair.

preverbal emergence and visceral interment, I illustrate how shame becomes perpetuated and lived into in affective cycles related to shame itself and anger-rage. These aggregate cycles, perpetuated by trauma, illustrate the distinctive and problematic nature of shame that goes unacknowledged and interred. Repressed, masked, or confused with other affects, shame induces detrimental physiological states and behavior, transforming into additional shame, self-disgust, and violence.[6]

The ranges and cycles of shame along with the capacity of society to shape bodies in shame entails a discussion about how bodies are both affective and affected. Pierre Bourdieu's conception of *habitus* and Silvan Tomkins' script theory offer rich ways to see how shame becomes interred in the self functioning, to shape bodies. Both Bourdieu's and Tomkins' theories elucidate means of bodily learning. Bourdieu's assertions rest on the subtle ways that power is exchanged and manipulated in the hands of social and cultural institutions, while Tomkins' premise rests on his understanding of affect. Both theorists refute the idea that bodies form in isolation or independently from the systems that surround them, thus supporting the assertion that bodies can be shaped in shame.

## Affect Theory

Emerging as an accepted theory in the second half of the 20th century, affect theory has various permutations and multiple disciplinary expressions. In psychology, the concept of affects, theorized initially by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Jacques Lacan,

[6] Lewis, "Introduction: Shame," 21-26; Scheff, "The Shame-Rage Spiral," 109; Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 64-70, 105, and 189; and Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic,* 110-114.

gained more explicit attention in Silvan Tomkins' four volume series *Affect Imagery Consciousness*. Tomkins' work first developed the more abstract idea of affect into a theory laying the ground work for the many interpretations of affect that have abounded since 1995.[7] Tomkins' precision and expansion of the idea of affect into an approach also established the foundation for critical theorists who wanted to respond to crisis, suffering, trauma, and violence using more than the lens of Freudian analysis and Freud's theory of the drive mechanisms. Looking for a psychological approach that both acknowledged and grounded the body, these scholars integrated Tomkins' work into their own.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank were among the first few to highlight Tomkins' work, integrating his theories into an exploration of human behavior within the humanities. Their co-edited book, *Shame and its Sisters,* posits shame as a central affect in human experience, both necessary for human connection and unfortunately ignominious. Their theoretical commitment to understanding that the stimulation of affects "reflects the complex interleaving of endogenous and exogenous, perceptual, proprioceptive, and interpretive – causes, effects, feedbacks, motives, long-term states such as moods and theories, along with transitory or verbal events"[8] prompted scholarship that refuted hard distinctions between stimulus and response, between the world "out there" and the body. The malleable relationship between the external and internal creates space for the body to be understood alongside and integrated with mental processes. Although a fleshy boundary persists between body and world, the immediacy

[7] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 61 and 73.

[8] Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and Its Sisters*, 11.

of affects blurs their differentiation. In affective experience, the connections between body and mind, insofar as they constitute distinct entities, happen so rapidly that visceral phenomena frequently evade conscious processes. Though, that biology and physiology cannot be dissociated from cognition and behavior supports my assertion that theological rhetoric and practice arouse and influence affects, while possessing the capacity to shape bodies.

Most recently, research in affective neuroscience has further supported the resistance to the dichotomization of body and mind, demanding that the two comprise a system, which is intimately connected to the external world. This destabilization of the hard categories represented by the body and its external environment also materializes in research projects in the humanities. Thus, shifting the enlightenment's epistemological legacy that dissociated body from mind prevails as a characteristic thematic and goal shared by affect theorists. These theorists conjoin visceral and cognitive processes approaching the study of the human as what Catherine Malabou calls an "organism."[9] Stressing the importance of the relationship between "the outside and the inside," that is between the brain and the body, or the self and the environment, Malabou links primordial, biological experiences of affects with the social stimulation of affect. Shame remains one of these especially regarding the importance of the face in indicating shame in affect exchange. Shame, a preverbal, visceral, and variable somatic experience, can be triggered, isolated, concealed, or blended, and it occurs in relationship, either regulated or dysregulated, signaling multiple ways of being in corporeal reality. Importantly, shame

[9] Adrian Johnston and Catherine Malabou, *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 30.

signifies attachment even as it provokes the desire to hide. Whatever the case, shame, like every affect, becomes a defining factor in the way individuals navigate, approach, and engage in social relationships.

## Silvan Tomkins to Alan Schore

The biological and physiological nature of affects, legitimized by research in psychology and neuroscience, also accounts for an affect's fractiousness. Affects, like shame, emerge viscerally as a result of triggers or stimuli, and, at least initially, are difficult to control. Silvan Tomkins, Donald Nathanson, and Alan Schore all show, each in distinctive ways, that affects arise through the body, grasping the body and demanding attention, either consciously or unconsciously. Together their work facilitates an understanding of affects as preverbal, visceral experiences, which arise during experiences with other persons or objects, while arousing the corresponding affect interest-excitement.

According to Tompkins, affects are spontaneous muscular glandular responses located throughout the body and triggered at subcortical centers, which emerge as visible signs of visceral experiences on the face.[10] Facial expressions of affects precede bodily behavior of affects, evidencing an affect's spontaneity and intractability.[11] Tompkins's interest in the face emerges from two sources: French neurologist G.B. Duchenne's work in *Mécanisme de la Physionomie Humaine* and Charles Darwin's discoveries in *The*

[10] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 135.

[11] Ibid., 115.

*Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. In line with Duchenne, Tomkins argues that affects, despite their inherent individual particularity, emerge publicly in the muscles and motor nerves of the face.[12] As evidence for the biological and evolutionary inheritance of affect according to Darwin, Tompkins recorded images of the face using a camera designed to take 10,000 frames per second. He employed this data in his explication of each affect where he uses such images to illustrate the facial expressions affiliated with a particular affect.

Tomkins' analytical elaboration of the manifestation of affect in the face helps to distinguish his theory from the dominance of Freud's drive theory, which holds that negative affect or tension emerges when an organism's particular needs fail to be met. Freud's drive theory, indicated primarily through hunger and libido, has a strongly biological component; it demands an object to alleviate or to satisfy the need and reduce the drive. For instance, a person feels hungry, and the object of food satisfies the need, eliminating hunger. Theoretically, once the object of a drive is provided, the drive diminishes in strength. Alternatively, if a drive remains unsatisfied, such as physical hunger for food, the lack likely leads to death. In the case of affects however, no "innate, easily identifiable consummatory activity" that will likely reduce the said affect exists.[13] For instance, if a person feels fear, nothing like food or water can be consumed or ingested to reduce fear. Instead, fear's modification occurs through some instrumental activity: taking a walk, managing affairs, and meditation. Active management does not

[12] Ibid., 123-133.

[13] Ibid., 97.

succeed all of the time or for all of the affects. In particular, the modification of shame does not eradicate the shame experience. Rather as a result of empathic connection, for instance expressed as laughter, shame's intensity decreases, and the bonds that shame disturbs are restored.

In addition to asserting the dominance of the face in affect expression, Tomkins identifies nine discrete biological affects, most of which he articulates as affect pairs: interest-excitement, enjoyment-joy, surprise-startle, distress-anguish, anger-rage, fear-terror, shame-humiliation, dismell, and disgust. These affect pairs signal a range of intensity. For instance, interest peaks at excitement; distress disintegrates into anguish, while shame degenerates into humiliation. Of all the affects, Tomkins writes that, "Shame strikes deepest into the heart of man."[14] When Tomkins asserts this, and later calls shame a "sickness of the soul," he locates shame at the core of the self.[15] His psychological assertion about shame's centrality and its capacity to indicate injury of the self comes to fruition in the theological anthropologies I interpret.

Shame's physiological nature raises a question about where to locate affect in terms of feelings and emotions. The physical reactions that precede and elicit an affect's emergence on the face as a result of stimuli render affects and affective experience preverbal. This detachment from language demarcates affects from emotions and feelings. According to Tomkins, a "feeling" indicates conscious discernment of an affect and the awareness that an affect has been triggered. Feeling associates with the cognitive

[14] Ibid., 351.

[15] Ibid., 387.

processing and subsequent verbal expression of an affect. To "feel" shame is to attach a conscious cognitive interpretation of the shame experience to the affect itself.

When any affect, including shame, aligns with a narrative, attaching to precise experiences or provocations, it becomes an emotion. "Emotion," a step beyond feeling, indicates the combination of the triggered affect with memory or previous experiences of a particular affect. Emotions represent "the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience,"[16] which give meaning to affects. Attached to cognitive processes, emotions, for Tomkins, take shape when affects congeal to create a "script," also understood as "sets of rules by which an individual predicts, interprets, responds to, and controls life's events."[17] Scripts are not directly related to performance or roles but rather are variable, internal, attached to affect, and never stop "seizing" an individual. Largely influenced by Tomkins, Donald Nathanson describes the relationship between affect and emotion by asserting that "whereas affect is biology, emotion is biography."[18] Emotions rely on language development and memory, while affects' nature as preverbal evince what happens to bodies. Feelings attach language to bodily affects pulling them from the primarily visceral, interpreting and communicating affective experience.

Affects' corporeality designates them as radically present; feelings attempt to capture affect, requiring higher order brain mechanisms necessary for discernment, while

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[16] Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2002), 28.

[17] Donald Nathanson, prologue to *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* Vols. 3 and 4, by Silvan Tomkins (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008), xxii; see also Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and Its Sisters,* 179-188.

[18] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 50.

emotions are the complex constructions that associate affects with memories and the stimuli that trigger them.[19] Affects then serve as a bridge that brings the body's experiences into consciousness, while emotions tell a story about what circumstances or events have inspired feeling. An affect, according to Antonio Damasio, cannot be used as a synonym for emotion or feeling; instead, an affect is "the thing you display (emote) or experience" prior to the verbal construction of emotion.[20] Fundamental to emotions, affects are more than emotions in that they seize the body in a way that that challenges comprehension. Biological, physiological, and visceral, affects authenticate the immediate experience of the world before conscious awareness of emotions or moods evolves, solidifying into scripts associated with particular life events.

Neuroscientific approaches to affects, made better known through Damasio's research, have also emerged in the work of Jaak Panskepp, Joseph Le Doux, and Allan Schore. Of particular interest to this analysis, Schore's influential contributions to affect theory, along with an integration of attachment theory, offer a more nuanced understanding of shame within human bonds and as implicated in self-development. Synthesizing infant studies with neuroscience (neurobiology, behavioral neurology, and neuropsychology) and psychoanalytic theory (self-psychology and object relations), Schore posits that, as an affect, shame emerges and fluctuates within a dyad, in the

[19] Ibid., 49-50.

[20] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1999), 342

exchange between two people or in social relationships. Shame, though, can be experienced in isolation and only relies on interest in something or someone else.[21]

Schore's research elucidates, among other things, the relationship between socio-affective experiences and the maturation of the human brain. Informed by his clinical practice as a psychotherapist, his articulation of neurological models of the impact of early attachment trauma, and his neurobiological conceptions of Freud's theory of the unconscious, Schore's discoveries about affect have transformed prior interpretations of the importance of the caregiver-infant dyad, emphasizing the critical role that the caregiver plays in the affect regulation of the infant. In the optimal caregiver-infant dyad, the caregiver is attuned to and mirrors the child's behavior, maximizing attachment bonds. He argues that "human development, including its internal neurochemical and neurobiological mechanisms," cannot be understood apart from the transactions between the caregiver-infant dyad, which he views as an "affect-transacting relationship."[22] This pronouncement lies at the heart of Schore's assertions about the origins of selfhood: that the self evolves in progressions directly related to 1) affect experienced by the caregiver that is displayed or replicated by the infant and 2) the regulation of that affect.[23] Using the caregiver-infant dyad as a model, Schore's research facilitates an understanding of affects

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[21] Philosophically this can be described as shame in the presence of a real or imagined other in front of whom one feels shame, as in Paul Sartre's, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993), or in Bernard William's *Shame and Necessity*, where shame occurs as a consciousness of a loss or failure of the self to live up to the expectations of an idealized other, see pages 219-220.

[22] Allan Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1994), 7.

[23] Ibid., 26 and 178-9.

as a part of the attachment phenomenon. Thus, while he focuses on the experience of the infant, his findings illuminate that early attachment patterns related to affect manifest in adult relationships.[24]

Within the caregiver-infant dyad and later between adults, the face facilitates the affective mode of communication by both eliciting and regulating affect.[25] This dyad serves as a model for affect regulation, especially important in cases of shame. Dysregulation occurs when negative affects become overwhelming, for instance when a child cries and the caregiver fails to respond. In such cases, where attunement of the caregiver to the infant fails, shame results. When this failure of attunement occurs repeatedly, as in cases of child abuse and neglect, a corresponding breakdown in attachment develops. These sorts of early attachment failures become significant sources for shame. Regarding the role that the caregiver plays in the regulation of affect in an infant, Schore concludes that a dysregulated nervous system, or a hyper-aroused nervous system, inhibits safety, cognitive processes, and learning, while promoting dissociation.[26] Therefore, the immediate affective experience of shame incurs a failure to process information and leads to repression, denial, and interment; being flooded by shame has serious physiological ramifications, isolating the self through detachment and, by association, prohibiting or precluding learning even in a theological or ecclesial environment.

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[24] Ibid., 97.

[25] Ibid., 281.

[26] Ibid.,192, and 243-44.

On even a moderate level, triggered shame coalesces with or becomes concealed by other affects making it difficult to distinguish these from one another over time. Schore labels this process "blending."[27] In blending, affects function as constituents, coalescing to create emotions. In Schore's theory, emotions constitute a conglomeration of energetic affects and associate with memory, thus requiring, as Damasio and Nathanson posit, greater cognitive dimensions for interpretation than affects alone. However, at this point of interpretation and exegesis, things can become muddied. Merging affects and attaching them to particular stimuli occurs developmentally but leads to pathology when the blending happens during dysregulation, hypo- or hyper-arousal. For instance, shame blended with guilt, rage, or disgust in the dyadic relationship during dysregulation becomes further interred, confused, and maladaptive, or pathological.

Thus, looking through the lens of affect theory and affective neuroscience establishes shame as a biological, physiological affect that emerges immediately. Its immediacy gives rise to urgency enhanced and exacerbated by its evasion of language and conscious control: shame as preverbal is often also confused with other affective states especially in the transition of affect as biology to affect translated or expressed as emotion. In the latter case, affects become imbricated with memory and external stimuli. Further, although affects are biological, their regulation transpires in the social world. Even though affects also emerge in physical isolation, they often require a real or perceived other in relation, both to transpire and in order to repair. This is especially the

[27] Ibid., 32-33.

case for shame. Therefore, shame, as an affect, stimulated and modulated in relationship must also be repaired in relationship.

## Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to Lauren Berlant

In 1995, the publication of two influential essays indicated a move toward affect in critical theory. Apart from psychology and neuroscience, these essays emphasize affect as a bodily source of information while promoting the importance of an interdisciplinary study of affect.[28] The first, written by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, entitled "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold," argued in strong support of Tomkins' work on affect. Situated at the beginning of their edited compilation *Shame and its Sisters*, the essay pays homage to Tomkins and captures some of his most astute theories. Also published the same year was Brian Massumi's "The Autonomy of Affect."[29] In this essay, Massumi does for Spinoza and Deleuze what Sedgwick and Frank do for Tomkins; Massumi carries forward their theories of affect into contemporary critical theory.

These critical theories establish affects apart from their neurological description and also expand affect to include its influence on experience beyond the psychoanalytic or therapeutic environment. In addition, psychology, philosophy, critical theory, and literary studies all intersect within affect theory in ways that undermine discrete disciplinary boundaries. Sedgwick identifies affects as informative for multiple disciplinary inquiries, thus establishing a methodology that this project assumes.

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[28] Clough and Halley, *The Affective Turn*, 232, and Gregg and Seigworth, *Affect Theory Reader*, 5.

[29] Brian Massumi, "Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique,* no. 31 (1995): 83 -109.

For Sedgwick, affects engage individuals in proceeding towards a progressive truth that embraces shifting and performing selves, and thus, affects play a role as mediums within cultural political struggles. Sedgwick employs an analysis of texts as she aims to distance her work from dualistic thought while fostering the ability to *do* non-dualistic thinking. Her use of texts allows her to expand the idea, critical to this project, that language itself is productive of reality and that affective life is foundational to that reality. In addition, her concept of affect theory includes that affects are both particular and ambiguous, such that an affect triggered by a particular moment and related to a particular narrative can also be confused with or concealed by other affective experiences. These qualities of particularity and ambiguity, most poignant in relationship to shame, attach affects to singular encounters of exposure, which often subsume shame or lead to its misinterpretation.

Sedgwick's non-dualist approach grounded in affect theory has its roots in Baruch Spinoza's rejection of the mind-body dualism apparent in Renee Descartes's *The Ethics*. Affect theorists who have challenged the Enlightenment's mind-body split follow Spinoza's philosophical lead, even if indirectly. As pointed out by Gilles Deleuze, the guidance that Spinoza provides includes his view of life as full of variation, always mutable, consisting of rapidly altering affects and ideas. These affects "indicate or express a constitution of the body (or some part of it), which the body (or some part of it) has because its power of acting, *or* force of existing, is increased or diminished, aided or

restrained."[30] Thus, affects represent a continuing force of existence that also always changes; in physiological terms, affects immediately alter bodies and, in their urgency, are uncontrollable. Spinoza's work thus aligns not only with the affect psychologists' and neurologists' claim that affects are of the body and make an impact upon the body's capacity, but his ethical treatment of affect also materializes in Tomkins' examination regarding the intensification or diminishment of affects and in Tomkins' locating shame within a frame that situates the self as always in relation.

Shame has implications for how the self perceives itself and how others perceive the self. Intensification and diminishment of shame, then, occur as a result of such perceptions. For instance, when Sedgwick discusses shame, she recognizes its valuations as biologically useful when it points to interest and fosters attachment. Toxic shame, on the other hand, as repressed or denied shame, ultimately fosters violence. Both psychological and physical violence sever attachment. In either case, shame becomes formative directing and shaping the self according to the way that attachment bonds concretize, either towards or away from others. The affective movement of shame occurs immediately, slipping away from conscious control, as Spinoza expresses: "a passion of the mind is a confused idea by which the mind affirms of its body, or some part of it, a greater or lesser force than before, which, when it is given, determines the mind to think this rather than that."[31] Sedgwick expands Spinoza's construction as she considers shame

[30] Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 113.

[31] Spinoza, *Ethics*, 112.

to be a structuring agent of identity both physiologically shaping bodies but also conceptually conceived, articulated, and performed.

Spinoza's idea of affect also influences Deleuze and Guattari, who build upon Spinoza's understanding of the body as always in flux, or moving from one state to another. This concept of a body's fluidity also emerges in Sedgwick's assertion of an affective force surrounding performativity and directing bodies. Deleuze and Guatarri express this phenomenon as affects' being like "projectiles," or "weapons," which cause an increase or decrease in the body's capacity to act.[32] Affects, like shame, thus shape bodies; affects *affect* how bodies move, perform, and exist in the social world. Deleuze and Guatarri understand this and, associating affect with body, they echo the notion of affect as autonomic, or unconscious, and as having original intensity that is both unformed and unstructured but highly organized according to recursion; thus, affects repeat themselves.[33] Recursion relates to Tomkins' and Nathanson's assertions that affects triggered by specific stimuli coagulate in emotional constructions and can therefore be retriggered by similar stimuli far after the initial stimulus has taken place. Furthermore, both the philosophical and psychological conceptions of affect assert that affects are indistinguishable from body and, therefore, are autolectic. That is, affects exist for their own sake.

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[32] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xvii.

[33] Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual*, 28.

Following Deleuze, Kathleen Stewart describes affects as varied and surging forces that influence daily living. Her text *Ordinary Affects* highlights what I claim about the banality of shame: it is an everyday experience. According to Stewart, from affects as "circulating forces" cues to behavior ensue so directly that "the term 'hardwired' has become shorthand for the state of things."[34] She notes that "[affects] are not exactly 'personal' but they can pull the subject into places it didn't exactly 'intend' to go," connecting affects to behaviors.[35] Viscerally self-generated, affects occur with a certain spontaneity that directs human action. For her, external forces make an impact on the most intimate and vulnerable aspects of life: autogenic, corporeal, ordinary affects. Furthermore, Stewart emphasizes the unpredictability of affects. Difficult to foresee, or calculate, these muscular, glandular responses capture the attention of reason and thought often with an unexpected immediacy.

Sharing Stewart's intention to explore the role of affect in bridging individual and social life while also reflecting Sedgwick's contributions and influence, Lauren Berlant's distinct contemporary project seeks to understand affect both through a psychoanalytical (Tomkins) and a philosophical (Deleuze) lens. She aims in her work for cultural and political transformation, objecting to particular, isolated kinds of embodiment. Offering to affect theory the idea of thinking affect epistemologically, she supports and expands on what she calls Sedgwick's creation of "genuinely transformative pedagogy."[36]

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[34] Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 28.

[35] Ibid., 40.

[36] Lauren Berlant, "Eve Sedgwick, Once More," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (2009): 1090.

Furthermore, the physiological immediacy and variability of affect lead Berlant to assert that "…affect management is always belated."[37] Her perspective links the tradition of intellectual activism inherent in post-colonial theory with the sex-radical works of Deleuze, Guatarri, and Sedgwick, who in her view, through their progressive work on affect and shame, have "countered the malignity of modern national body politics."[38]

Overall, Berlant's work argues for an approach to life in which affect, instead of rational thought, shapes epistemology. Her lens informs this theological analysis translating into the idea that affects edify cognitive understanding of belief and faith, just as they shape the Christian self. Committed to navigating identity or self-perception while undermining identity politics, Berlant adopts Sedgwick's understanding of attachment: affects provoke both pleasure and destruction, shaping personal investment in life and in relationships with others. Additionally, she credits Sedgwick for informing her own awareness of aesthetic and affective dynamics.[39] Her posture and adoption of Sedgwick's ideas thus reflect how she has embraced a conception of affects as both undeniable and ambiguous. For Berlant, an affect's power to seize the body in the present moment and then to move that body renders affect undeniable, but all the while the affect obscures itself as the primary mover somewhere between a person's cognitive response to act and conditioned behavior. As such, behavioral responses to the emergence of affect, themselves nearly immediate, call into question whether the response is to the affect itself

[37] Lauren Berlant, *Sex, or the Unbearable*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 41.

[38] Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 102.

[39] Berlant, "Eve Sedgwick, Once More," 1089.

or instead marks a habituated reaction that evades cognitive processing. Stimulated affect can thus become immediately concealed, or obscured, by other affects as they emerge into conscious awareness, making possible the theological elision of guilt and shame.

What is also significant in Berlant's work is her insistence that affects make life indubitably present. Her assertion that affects locate beings in the here and now to a startling degree underlies a core assumption in this project concerning how affects participate in Christian practice. Affects have an intensity that demands immediacy. This immediacy and intensity distinguishes affects from emotions, which are "qualified intensity."[40] Berlant discerns affects from emotions in a vein similar to Tomkins and Nathanson. She asserts that affects transform into emotions through the articulation of meaning systems and narratives; that is, first visceral affects are triggered. Next, the brain associates the biological experience with memories of the triggered affect or other affects. At this point of convergence, affects, articulated as feelings, become structured as emotions. But before cognitive capacities create narratives, affects make a sudden impact on bodies and have a triggering capacity. Thus, bodies respond to affects, which emerge immediately on the face before cognitive processes intervene or attach to more complex cognitive constructions including but not limited to thoughts, memory, or history. Yet, affects function independently as biological experiences initially evading particular narratives because, as Berlant contends, affects cannot, at least at first, be consciously regulated. Thus, by being immediately present, in some way, affects force an awareness

[40] Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual*, 27-28.

of the body prior to conscious awareness. Thus, affects make the body known and recognized.

## Shame as Affect

Understanding shame and how it can be concealed by or combined with other affects necessitates a disentangling of shame from other affective experiences. Schore explains the distortion of affects as the neurobiological process of affect blending. Tomkins asserts that confusion like "blending" emerges because affects can "combine with, modulate, or suppress other affects."[41] Tomkins stresses that shame is particularly susceptible to combining with other affects because of its central place in human life and human discord. In fact, of the nine affects, the negative affect of shame-humiliation possesses some of the most potent properties capable of merging with, restraining, and/or modulating other affects.

The collusion of affects theologically often occurs, at least rhetorically, between shame and guilt. In recent decades, literature in the humanities and social sciences interested in the impact of shame has sought to make distinctions between guilt and shame as affective experiences. Furthermore, while some scholars, like Tomkins, believe that the distinction between shame and guilt at the initial visceral level is subtle,[42] recent research in affect theory, pharmacology, and neuroscience, such as research by Tangney,

[41] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 76.

[42] See Kaufman and Raphael, *Coming Out of Shame,* and Elspeth Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

Dearing, and Schore, has identified guilt and shame as distinct, particular, and unique experiences.[43] Distinguishing shame from guilt clarifies the mechanisms, logic, and impact of each.

## Preverbal

Guilt can be distinguished from shame not only according to its perceivable biological, ontogenetic evolution, but also according to the accompanying cognitive operations for each affect.[44] Tompkins distinguishes shame from guilt based on conscious processes that produce physiological shifts in intensity and duration. For instance, he considers the developmental process for children in terms of information processing to identify shame. Tomkins observes that vulnerability in the child to shame arises as soon as he or she learns to identify the face of the mother, or in the case of multiple caregivers – familiar faces in general. According to Tomkins, this biological response originates when a child is approximately seven months old, prior to language development, and manifests when a child's emotive response is met by displeasure from the primary caregiver.[45] For example, a child smiles, and this physical sign of pleasure or happiness

[43] See Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*. Their work has contributed to much of the current understanding of the differences psychologically between shame and guilt evidenced by the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) first developed in 1989. Modified several times after this publication to make adjustments for age, the test measures shame-proneness or guilt-proneness in individuals and is known for its foundation in distinguishing guilt from shame; for a general assumption of this difference see also Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, Gilligan, *Violence*, and Nathanson, *Shame and Pride,* 147. Nathanson argues that pharmacological remedies for shame and guilt differ. Even anthropological literature distinguishes the affects from each other; see Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.

[44] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 350.

[45] Sedgwick and Frank, *Shame and Its Sisters*, 6; Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 120-135.

evokes dissatisfaction or contradictory displeasure in the caregivers' gaze, thus evoking a shame response in the child. The observable body posture of the child usually entails one or some combination of the following: a bowed head, an averted gaze, downcast eyes, blushing, slumped shoulders, inhibited movement, and/or other behaviors that signify hiding.[46]

Tomkins reflects an ontogenetic distinction between shame and guilt, which Erik Erikson supports in his developmental research on children.[47] Erikson posits that shame emerges earlier in the life cycle than guilt does. In Erikson's theory of psychosocial stages, the infant encounters "crises" of shame beginning at the age of approximately18 months, a time when the child is becoming aware of being observed, but it lacks the cognitive capacities for more advanced speech constructions. The crisis of guilt begins later, at the age of three, when a child is cognitively able to acknowledge and modify behavior.[48] At this stage of development, the child starts to understand his/her capacity to take initiative and to "do" something, but he/she also begins to realize that attached to the thing done is some qualifier; behavior is either good or bad, and the child can articulate this. In addition, the three to five year old child, aware of his or her existence as an autonomous person, confronts issues of what kind of person he/she might be.

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[46] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 141. See also Nathanson, *Shame and Pride,*141; Block Lewis, "Introduction: Shame," 17; Herman, "Shattered Shame States and their Repair," 5.

[47] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 368; Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (1950; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1993), 255-258; Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980), 71–80.

[48] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 255-258, and *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 71–80. See also Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self*, 153.

Children begin to experience both shame and guilt after they are able to differentiate themselves and their bodies as other from the caregiver. Self-recognition is therefore a "*prerequisite*" for experiencing both shame and guilt.[49] Even so, as Schore asserts, experienced prior to language development, shame represents a more "primitive" experience than guilt.[50] Therefore, while shame and guilt both require that a child be able to identify the self as distinct from the caregiver, shame occurs before the capacity to use words evolves. Guilt emerges only after a child begins to talk.

This aspect of shame as primitive and preverbal persists in the adult self. Preverbal qualities of shame reflect shame's biological nature and substantiate its immediacy; it inspires a body to act before conscious processes have time to intervene. But this trajectory, along with shame as a painful, negative affect, also often results in shame's interment. The immediate sensation of shame that provokes a visceral response becomes buried in the self until the shame is repaired. The severity of the shame experience does not require language and, therefore, language alone cannot repair shame, which interred is more primal, requires more neurobiological processing, and endures longer than guilt.[51]

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[49] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 141.

[50] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self*, 153.

[51] Michl et al., "Neurobiological Underpinnings of Shame and Guilt," 5.

## The Inferior Self

Where shame relates to the self, guilt results from actions. Thus, shame as a negative affect intertwines with a negative self-perception. In fact, perception of the self represents the key difference in the two experiences: in guilt the self remains unified; in shame parts of the self (or the whole self) are renounced or considered "bad" and inferior.

Identifying shame as one of several developmental crises, Erikson delineates it as related to individual perception of the self, instead of, as in the case of guilt, related to behavior. Guilt, while experienced internally, emerges when an action or behavior falls outside of what the "I" perceives as good, moral, or accepted. Thus, the *manner* of conducting oneself is criticized. Freud's work on ego development underlies Erikson's assertions, as Freud associated shame with early narcissistic conflicts, reflected in the bodily loss of the mother, and guilt with later moral ones.[52] Where guilt and shame often become confused or conflated is when shame underlies feelings of guilt about behavior.

Thus, guilt as the result of a wrong action, as an emotional response to an apparent mistake or wrongdoing, distinguishes itself from shame, which implies no standard of comparison as distinct from having done something wrong or right. Instead, shame points to some wrong inherent and inescapable in the self. Indeed, shame's incommensurability is met with guilt's predictability. Moreover, the experience of shame precipitates a lowered sense of self-worth, while an act of apparent wrongdoing precipitates a feeling of remorse. In essence then, shame relates to value placed upon the self, while guilt relates to value placed upon behavior. This distinction becomes more

[52] Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 30-34.

apparent and needed as the guilt-ethic continues to be a source for pedagogy within the Christian tradition.

Tomkins asserts a primary difference between shame and guilt when he relates guilt to morality and choices about moral matters unidentifiable by the infant.[53] Guilt elicits a shame about morality or directives about behavior that require more advanced cognitive processes which exceed an infant's capacities. For instance, a child in guilt cognitively associates wrong action with behavior; however, in shame, a child responds even before he/she acquires the ability to reason between right and wrong. Furthermore for Tomkins, guilt provokes the disparagement of behavior that must be perceived as transgressing an established and understood norm. Thus, developmentally and since it stems from more complex cognitive processes, guilt emerges later than shame.

Like guilt, shame can also be aroused by apparent failures or defects that appear to deviate from the norm, but these generally elicit contempt, derision, or avoidance, even if imagined; guilt, while eliciting disapproval, can be appeased by remorse.[54] Furthermore, the physiological symptoms experienced in shame occur less intensely in guilt. For instance, Darwin associated morality and the idea of God with guilt, asserting that that the elicitation of guilt from an individual reflecting on a wrong action committed before an all-powerful God did not induce the physiological expressions of shame emitted through the constriction of blood vessels manifesting as blushing.[55] The acuteness of

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[53] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery,* Consciousness, 351.

[54] Williams, *Shame and Necessity,* 90.

[55] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*, eds. Joe Cain and Sharon Messenger, (1872; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 2009), 306.

shame, along with its earlier emergence, intertwines with a particular logic, if a somewhat tragic one: "If I disappear, then no one will see me, and my shame will go away."[56] Bernard Williams writes that, "…the most primitive experiences of shame are connected with sight and being seen, but it has been suggested that guilt is rooted in hearing, the sound in oneself of the voice of judgment; it is the moral sentiment of the word."[57] In these cases, shame takes place within what I continue call a logic of exposure.

The idea that one disappears in guilt, escaping the sight of the other, emerges in Tangney and Dearing's research, which distinguishes guilt-prone individuals from those who are shame-prone based on stable or unstable self-attributions related to behavior. In the case of guilt, individuals concentrate on some kind of committed act involving more "internal, specific, and fairly unstable attributions."[58] To illustrate the point, Tangney and Dearing use the example of a guilt-prone woman who cheats on her boyfriend, a specific behavior about which she takes responsibility. She discerns the causes of her cheating and lack of truthfulness as variable and internally processes these in a way that considers her behavior as context specific. She does not perceive herself as promiscuous or disloyal. Alternatively, shame focuses on a global, enduring, inferior self and thus involves "internal, stable, and global attributions."[59] Tangney and Dearing explain the shame-prone individual response to the same indiscretion: cheating.

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[56] Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, 90.

[57] Ibid., 89.

[58] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 53.

[59] Ibid.

> A young man in similar circumstances (cheating on his girlfriend) may feel an acute sense of shame – feeling disgraceful and small, wanting to hide, even disappear. Focusing on *himself*, he knows he is responsible (an internal attribution). Moreover, he views the causes of this transgression as likely to affect many aspects of his life, as characteristic of the type of person he is – disloyal, untrustworthy, immoral, even reprehensible! In short, he makes attributions to quote fundamental features of himself that have much broader implications beyond the specific transgression at hand (global attributions). Finally, he views these factors as persisting across time (stable attributions); he'll be facing the same character flaws tomorrow, and the next day and the next.[60]

The shame-prone individual experiences an undermined sense of self in relation to another that is pervasive and long lasting. Instead of being focused on a contingent and dependent act, the shame-prone individual internalizes and overgeneralizes an act that defines his/her state as deficient. Deficiency is understood first through the body; shame "turns itself inside out"[61] exposing the self, eliciting the desire to hide, back away, or isolate. The distinction between shame-prone verses guilt-prone individuals also raises questions about the usefulness of guilt-ethic in the Christian tradition to prohibit violence the root of which is shame.[62]

Since guilt does not have the same quality of defining self-worth as shame does, it compels more constructive behavior instead of leading to destructive judgmental behaviors toward the self and others.[63] However, guilt that masks shame, or is misidentified as shame, poses the same problems as shame does. Guilt not conflated with shame can generally be repaired through restitution; often a simple apology can discharge

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[60] Ibid., 53-54.

[61] Sedgwick and Frank, *Touching Feeling*, 38.

[62] Gilligan, *Violence*, 235-36.

[63] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 137.

and heal guilt. However, if guilt is left to fester without repair and remuneration, it intensifies and turns into shame, which cannot be resolved or treated through penance.[64]

Thus, shame requires an intervention that involves dissolution of the perception of the inferior self, the restoration of dignity or self-worth, and the repair of broken attachment bonds. If the encounter with shame occurs at the moment of its emergence as a form of immediate intervention, in the form of laughter or empathetic connection, shame diminishes. However, unaddressed and dysregulated shame becomes interred in the body and ultimately deleterious. As a result, unlike guilt assuaged by restitution, or a simple "I am sorry," the amelioration of shame requires reattachment, or the promise of a "return to interest, joy, and connection."[65]

## Attachment

The narcissistic conflict related to a child's efforts to distinguish him/herself from others, such as the mother or another caregiver, requires what recent researchers of affect theory and developmental psychology call "attachment."[66] Attachment constitutes the instinctual and reflexive behavior of the infant to connect to the caregiver. Attachment manifests in the experience of the shame affect through interest-excitement. The infant cannot experience shame without the presence of interest-excitement and the instinctual urge to connect. The initial shock of shame occurs, according to Tomkins, when the

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[64] Spinoza, *Ethics*, 112.

[65] Probyn, *Blush*, xiii; Block Lewis, "Introduction," 23-25.

[66] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self,* 165. Carol Magai and Susan H. McFadden, *The Role of Emotions in Social Personality Development: History, Theory, Research* (New York, Plenum, 1995), 40 and 41.

affect of interest-excitement is interrupted but not completely terminated.[67] In other words, the infant pursues attachment to the caregiver, and somehow connection is truncated. Therefore, a general attachment to, or interest in, an object or event is a necessary precondition for the shame experience.[68] The partial curtailing of attachment or interest evokes shame, but attachment to the object, and in this case the caregiver, remains.

Shame is thus predicated upon a relationship to the other where the self (the child), as Helen Block Lewis asserts, "cares" about the other's (the caregiver's) opinion.[69] Here, she presents the nature of most human exchanges, including those within the therapeutic encounter or that occur on theological stages between the believer and God, or between the congregant and the minister/priest. Within these, shame emerges as the "self's vicarious experience of the other's real or imagined negative evaluation," which is more viscerally potent than guilt.[70] Lewis emphasizes the self as a target of attack in shame, in both the "visual and verbal imaging of the 'I' from the other's imagined point of view."[71] Research has also shown that neural activity in both hemispheres of the brain is greater in real or imagined conditions of shame than in guilt.[72]

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[67] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 188 and 212.

[68] Ibid., 160.

[69] Block Lewis, "Introduction: Shame," 16.

[70] Helen Block Lewis, "Shame and the Narcissistic Personality," in *The Many Faces of Shame,* ed. Donald L. Nathanson (New York: Guilford, 1987), 108.

[71] Block Lewis, "Introduction: Shame,"17.

[72] Petra Michl, Thomas Meindl, Franziska Meister, Christine Born, Rolf Engel, Maximilian Reiser, and Kristina Hennig-Fast, "Neurobiological Underpinnings of Shame and Guilt: A Pilot fMRI Study,"

Shame generally represents a "transition from a preexisting positive state to a negative state."[73] Mediated by the parasympathetic nervous system, shame functions like a "brake" to excited arousal states. Shame floods the body and transforms excited joy into something much more sober, or completely shuts down the body's capacity to act. Any threat to the self can trigger shame. For survivors of trauma such triggers are numerous and extremely detrimental. In general though, just as fear and its physiological correlates are integral components of the response when the physical self is threatened, shame and its accompanying physiology are constituent components of a coordinated psychobiological response triggered when the social self is threatened.[74]

Tracing how biology and the shame response coordinate helps to emphasize how shame relates to fear of annihilation, what Wilfred Bion calls a "nameless dread."[75] This fear or dread accompanies the unbearable pain of shame often experienced in situations of trauma, surfacing when the self experiences abandonment or the threat of abandonment. Actual or anticipated loss of the other, imagined other, or even part of the self instigates the terror of death. A deep sense of shame arises as a result of perceiving

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*Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* (2012): 6. Their research has shown that guilt also activates the amygdala, more in men than in women. The explanation for the gender difference lies in two hypothesis: 1) that women modulate shameful memories more than guilt memories and are capable of imagining reparation more easily than men, 2) that men perceive a significance in guilt related to guilt-specific emotional consequences or strategies designed to modulate emotion. Michl et al. recognize that these differences could be provoked by socialization, gender-based upbringing, and phylogenic differences.

[73] Herman, "*Shattered Shame States,*" 6.

[74] Dickerson, Gruenewald, and Kemeny, "When the Social Self is Threatened," 1194.

[75] Wilfred Bion, *Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* (1967; reprint, London: H. Karnac Books Ltd., 1984) 116.

oneself as vulnerable, helpless, and powerless in the face of potential, even if imagined, death.

Fear of annihilation ultimately indicates the existence of a perceived or real threat. The amygdala moderates the biological feedback loop that relates to self-preservation in the face of such threat. When it recognizes danger, even psychic danger, the amygdala activates arousal systems.[76] The amygdala is also "involved in the regulation of cortisol arousal, and it controls bodily responses (behavioral, autonomic, endocrine), which then provide feedback that can influence cortisol processing indirectly."[77] Research has shown that shame increases the stress hormones cortisol and ACTH (adrenocorticotropic hormone), while inhibiting the health of the immune system through pro-inflammatory cytokine activity.[78] The potential of shame to increase cortisol and adrenaline, increases the activity of the amygdala, thereby increasing both stress in the body and the potential for a flight or fight response in fear.[79] The body thus becomes dysregulated.

Attachment facilitates regulation, or at least within a modeling dyad, teaches an individual how to regulate him or herself. In part, success in facing shame occurs due to the presence of a safe and secure place for a shamed person to attach. Both Schore and Block Lewis see this as the role of therapy, where part of the therapeutic endeavor entails

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[76] Joseph E. LeDoux, "Emotional Circuits in the Brain," *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 23 (March 2000): 175.

[77] Ibid., 177.

[78] Dickerson, Gruenewald, Kemeny, "When the Social Self is Threatened," 1194.

[79] Anda van Stegeren, Oliver Wolf, Walter Everaerd, Philip Scheltens, Frederik Barkhof, and Serge Rombouts "Endogenous Cortisol Level Interacts with Noradrenergic Activation in the Human Amygdala," *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 87 (2007): 63.

revealing the relationship between shame and threatened attachment. Block-Lewis's understanding of treating shame correlates with Schore's ideas about shame regulation reflected in the response of the caregiver. Schore asserts that "The nature of the caregiver's response (or lack of it) at this point is critical to the regulation of the shame affect, that is, shame recovery and the subsequent evolution of an internalized mechanism to regulate shame stress states."[80] The caregiver teaches the infant how to regulate shame, before it becomes interred, just as the therapist does only after shame has been disinterred.

However, if a caregiver fails to respond to the child in shame, articulated by psychiatrists James Gilligan and Bruce D. Perry as illustrating a lack of empathy, the child as a result of interring shame experiences psychopathological development.[81] In addition, lack of empathy in a caregiver perpetuates shame in the child, and this experienced shame further inhibits the child's capacity for empathy thus contributing to the manifestation of aggressive or violent impulses.[82] According to Gilligan, all drives towards self-preservation, including attachment to others, disappear "when one approaches the point of being so overwhelmed by shame that one can only preserve one's self (as a psychological entity) by sacrificing one's body (or those of others)."[83] As a result, where guilt can lead to the amelioration of a situation, shame can worsen a situation primarily because of its inhibitory qualities; in a way, shame handicaps the

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[80] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self,* 165.

[81] Gilligan, *Violence*, 64 and 110. See also Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy who was Raised as a Dog* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 99 and 204.

[82] Gilligan, *Violence*, 64 and 110; Perry and Szalavitz, *The Boy who was Raised as a Dog*, 96-100.

[83] Gilligan, *Violence*, 110.

functioning (Christian) self and returns him/her to the state of the pre-verbal infant, interring shame. These complications lead Gilligan to refute the role of shame as producing positive changes in behavior; in fact, he sees shame as foundational for all violence. Other research on shame supports its link to violent behavior manifested in outward violence, self-mutilation, drug addiction, eating disorders, and suicide.[84] The shame experience that Gilligan addresses is the interred shame of self-worthlessness, that fears the turn towards the other in vulnerability, which Wurmser expresses as the feeling in shame of "not worth being loved and respected."[85]

The subtle, complex physiological response to shame contributes to the beginning of shame's interment in the body. This characteristic of shame, along with the diminishment of self-worth engenders a physiological response that signals, at least initially, withdrawal from others; yet, the amelioration of shame actually requires attachment to others.[86] Therefore, a dynamic within the shame structure includes the inhibition of empathy and hiding from exposure. Paradoxically empathetic connection, which includes exposure, repairs shame. Based on the psychological inferences one person makes about another person's mental and emotional states "occurring within a specific social context," empathetic connection provides opportunity for repair.[87]

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[84] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 7.

[85] Wurmser, *Torment Me, but don't Abandon Me*, 179.

[86] Mary Ayers, *Mother-Infant Attachment and Psychoanalysis: The Eyes of Shame* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003) 81 and 224.

[87] Schulte-Rüther, Markowitsch, Fink, and Piefke, "Mirror Neuron and Theory of Mind Mechanisms,"1354.

Significantly though, shame inhibits empathy and empathetic connection because the inferior self does not feel worthy of connection with the other. People prone to guilt do not share this experience; in guilt, no low sense of self-worth inhibits connection to others.[88]

In fact, whereas shame impairs empathy and negatively influences social skills, guilt facilitates empathic responses.[89] Shame interrupts what Schulte-Rüther et al. establish as the three core aspects involved in maintaining empathy, "i) an intuitive feeling of having something in common with the other person which relies on socially shared emotional experiences; (ii) cognitive mechanisms of perspective-taking; and (iii) the ability to maintain a self–other distinction during interpersonal interaction."[90] Thus, shame severs the ability to form social connections, disenabling cognitive processes that allow for perspective and interfering with the maintenance of boundaries between the self and the other. The crucial component illustrative of the physiological havoc that shame plays on the body is that shame arrests empathy, both self and other directed.[91]

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[88] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 5.

[89] Ibid., 88 and 112.

[90] Martin Schulte-Rüther, Hans J. Markowitsch, Gereon R. Fink, and Martina Piefke, "Mirror Neuron and Theory of Mind Mechanisms Involved in Face-to- Face Interactions: A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Approach to Empathy," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19, no. 8 (2007): 1354.

[91] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 143.

## The Severing

The affect of contempt-disgust that Tomkins identifies also, like guilt, closely associates with shame. Contempt-disgust and shame-humiliation correspond so intimately that teasing them apart proves difficult, especially in the experience of self-contempt, which as a lack of self-worth, relates more to shame than disgust. Distinguishing disgust from shame and defining the biological nature of disgust highlights the dynamism between the two affects and shows how disgust modulates and amplifies shame. From this interchange, an example of the severing of attachment that constitutes shame emerges.

Contempt-disgust has been shown to play an important evolutionary role in human existence. As an affect closely associated with the hunger drive, contempt-disgust signals to the brain the presence of some object that could be harmful to life.[92] Shared with the lower animals, those with more primitive characteristics than humans or other mammals, the affect communicates a warning, a signal, of danger and potential harm in the consummation of a specific object. The message of contempt-disgust is one of restraint followed by rejection. Transformed from its evolutionary role to protect an organism from consuming something dangerous, contempt-disgust relates to shame.

Disgust for things that are not taken into the mouth is more complex and begins to elucidate shame. Disgust surfaces in this case "on the basis either of a similarity of the stimulus characteristic of the new object to other disgusting objects or of the similarity to other disgusting objects produced by the similar constellation of an underlying wish to

[92] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 28 and 357.

incorporate an object close to it, when there are also wishes to maximize the distance rather than minimize it."[93] When an unfamiliar object seems similar to something considered disgusting, that object provokes nausea generally because it shares characteristics with an evolutionarily dangerous object, and the body responds with rejection. The desire for an object perceived as disgusting produces fear, or a wish to maximize nearness that solicits unease; when the fear surpasses desire, disgust results. In either case, disgust constitutes the rejection of something that has the potential to cause pleasure.

Not limited to its function as a defensive response, disgust is also learned. Initially, in the case of a child, learning takes place in the presence of a caregiver, who typically uses disgust to direct the behavior of the infant. Tomkins calls the caregiver who expresses disgust "the controller," or the one who attempts to reduce the affect of another.[94] Disgust manifests in a facial expression of the caregiver with the mouth turned down, and the lip is drawn up.[95] This physiological response to what a person finds disgusting communicates dislike and rejection, severing attachments. As a means of distancing the self from an object, disgust from a caregiver towards a child creates distance between them, eliciting in the child behaviors of withdrawal and hiding indicative of shame.[96] The sequence proceeds as the child responds in shame to a

[93] Ibid., 357.

[94] Ibid., 22, 56, and 57.

[95] Ibid., 367.

[96] Ibid., 357.

caregiver's disgust, internalizing this disgust and directing it inward towards the self or outward to others. The signals from the caregiver indicate what is to be regarded as disgusting, while disgust regarding a child's behavior manifests socially in the rejection of something or someone.[97]

The caregiver-infant dyad illustrates the initial relationship between contempt-disgust and shame. Each relates to the other through affect, and they rely on each other for affective feedback. The caregiver expressing contempt or disgust at the child elicits shame in the child. The communication is "do not touch, eat, drink, or behave in such a way." The internalization of disgust provokes shame and lowered self-worth, severing attachment. But disgust can also be projected outward. If the object remains desirable, but the child has learned that it is taboo, often the fear of acquisition will trump desire and provoke disgust. The rejected object, stigmatized, also represents something shameful.

Beyond the caregiver-infant dyad, stigmas that elicit disgust and subsequent shame also exist. Erving Goffman observes two kinds of stigma, those that are "abominations of the body" and those that are of "race, nation, and religion."[98] What is considered disgusting is prompted by an awareness of difference, where the norm, universal, or positive attributes are set up against what is not the norm, particular, or negative attributes. Initially, the caregiver establishes norms. Secondarily, culture, society, and religion determine the normal and the not normal, disgusting, shameful. Martha

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[97] Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1971), 29.

[98] Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963; reprint, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 4.

Nussbaum addresses the propensity of society through the law, and other organizing systems, to establish what lies outside of the norm and therefore constitutes disgust: "We use the idea of disgust of the 'reasonable man' to identify acts that may be (or should be) legally regulated."[99]

Social ordinances and religious prescriptions established by the "reasonable man" often merge in systems that reflect power, hierarchy, and domination. These stratified structures establish and identify the disgusting in order to arouse shame. The systems harmonize in a unique way, functioning as caregivers do when they assume the role of "controllers" of affect. Modulating affect through signaling disgust succeeds and is sustained socially because humans share similar visceral, affective, precognitive responses to stimuli. The shared factor exists in the body, specifically the biological experiences of shame and disgust.[100] When shame results provoked by disgust, it inhibits an individual's agency, severs his or her attachments, and enables hegemonic structures to exert control. This kind of social control makes an impact on every level of society dictating the disgusting and evoking shame. As with other kinds of affects, disgust assists

[99] Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 86.

[100] See Paul Ekman, Wallace Friesen, Maureen O'Sullivan, Anthony Chan, Irene Diacoyanni-Tarlatzis, Karl Heider, Rainer Krause, William Ayhan LeCompte, Tom Pitcairn, Pio E Ricci-Bitti, Klaus Scherer, Masatoshi Tomita, and Athanase Tzavaras. "Universals and Cultural Differences in the Judgments of Facial Expressions of Emotion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, no. 4 (1987). This article shows that social mores determining what or who is stigmatized or disgusting changes across cultures, although facial expressions exhibited in response to disgust are similar across cultures.

in the formation of a certain *habitus*, one that is both dispositional, or internalized, and manifest.[101] The *habitus* that it helps to concertize remains one of shame.

In his work on post-colonial shame, Timothy Bewes addresses shame as a complicated experience evoked when a person is misperceived and treated as something or someone disgusting, for instance, "a foreigner, a personality type, an ethical person, a generous spirit, a human being, an animal, an alien – that is incommensurable with our own experience."[102] Defining shame as a reaction to the meeting of the personal "I" with the misperception of that "I" through the eyes of another complicates shame. Bewes presents an interpretation of shame that distinguishes it from a subjective emotional experience like feeling fear or satisfaction, especially in its nature to be resistant to the logic of symptomatology.[103] In the experience of shame, a person has difficulty knowing and differentiating cause from effect and feels ashamed for feeling shame. Bewes recognizes shame as taking place cognitively yet communicated bodily as an affect. In his words, "shame seeks to hide itself, and yet it is nothing if not manifest."[104]

Shame seeks to hide itself, to sever attachments, because shame itself presents as disgusting. In addition, the perception of being disgusting elicits shame. Disgust, thus, indicates precisely what must be hidden or cut off. Disgust communicates and classifies the shameful, which transpires because it comes into view. As disgust evades its

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[101] Roy Nash, "Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 11 (1990), 433.

[102] Timothy Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 23.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 22.

evolutionary role to assume a social function, it ultimately interferes with and prohibits relationship building because it serves, in part, to sever attachments. The person in shame and disgusting (to him or herself and others) thus isolated has no way for repair, and shame becomes subsequently interred in the body.

## The Interminable Spirals of Shame

Shame can be best expressed as the body's physiological and embodied response to stimuli, frequently but not always related to trauma, in what Thomas J. Scheff calls an "interminable spiral."[105] The spiral of shame indicates how the body's response to internal shame reinforces the brain's experience of shame whether through additional shame or through rage.

Literature on shame refers invariably to shame's nature as self-perpetuating, contributing to envisioning shame as a cycle, or spiral. For instance, Darwin posits that blushing, a sign of shame, "is not only involuntary; but the wish to restrain it, by leading to self- attention, actually increases the tendency."[106] Later, Tomkins says all affects (except that of being startled) operate under the principle of contagion: "the experience of disgust is disgusting…the experience of shame is shaming."[107] The language of affect as "contagion" implies that shame spreads until it is arrested, interfering with and dis-easing

[105] Scheff, "The Shame-Rage Spiral," 109-149.

[106] Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions,* 288.

[107] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 163.

internal processes engendering the interminable spiral of shame and other similarly deleterious effects.

Envisioning shame in terms of two cycles, which mirror the idea of shame for shame and shame for rage, Piers and Singer describe patterned shame behavior as falling within either the realm of sexuality or the realm of hostility; these repetitious sequences show how shame influences the most essential levels of being,[108] figuring into the discussion of Augustine and Niebuhr in later chapters. The first cycle begins with a sexual impulse that contrasts with modes of expected behavior and engages with guilt. Social norms, laws, and religious doctrine determine the sexually normative and, as mentioned, the disgusting or shame-faced. Transgression of boundaries set up by institutions leads to guilt, and then finally, to inhibition or regression. If the guilt of transgression goes unaddressed, it becomes internalized as shame. The sense of having committed a violation or wrongdoing in guilt becomes part of self-definition when it goes unrepaired or ameliorated by remorse or apology. Festering and transmuting into shame, guilt for wrongdoing assimilated into the self invokes the depraved, unworthy self. Feeling sorry for the original infraction turns into disparagement of the self in shame, which fails to inhibit the behavior,[109] but rather leads to more acting out, and the guilt-shame cycle repeats itself.

Cycles of hostility include a similar progression: aggression leads to guilt then the subsequent inhibition of aggression. The resulting passivity morphs into shame, which

[108] Piers and Singer, *Shame and Guilt*, 31-33.

[109] Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt,* 138.

manifests as over-compensatory aggression and then further guilt.[110] Gilligan's work with incarcerated men who express that they use violence to denounce their own shame illustrates and dramatizes this cycle. As he explains, the aim for these men is to restore what they see as shame's opposite: pride.[111] Like Gilligan, Scheff sees that shame and rage relate, stating, "at the core of this issue is the phenomenon of having emotional reactions to one's emotional reactions."[112] For Scheff this includes feeling shame, rage, and subsequently experiencing shame for feeling rage. Shame and rage become intertwined, and the person in shame and rage feels further shame for having the feeling. Léon Wurmser calls this the "the well-known endless sequence of shame about shame."[113] These cycles manifest dysregulated shame, and shame that is evoked but not repaired increases or maintains levels of symptomatic behavior.[114] Thus, shame has a propensity to emerge in some context or another, if intervention fails to occur.

## Interred Shame

Because of affects' nature as energy from the body, the surge or submergence of affects like shame can cause deleterious effects especially if they remain in the body unconsciously processed. Shame's positive nature of signifying attachment morphs into

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[110] Piers and Singer, *Shame and Guilt*, 32.

[111] Gilligan, *Violence, 47*.

[112] Scheff, "The Shame-Rage Spiral," 112.

[113] Léon Wurmser "Shame: the Veiled Companion of Narcissism" in *The Many Faces of Shame*, ed. Donald Nathanson (New York: Guilford, 1987), 80.

[114] Scheff, "The Shame-Rage Spiral,"109.

destructivity when shame goes unacknowledged. Failing to address shame leads to shame's interment in the self. As physiological and visceral, the management of shame proves challenging, especially because, as a painful affect, people tend to want to will shame away, ignoring it or attempting to conceal it with other affects or pride. As mentioned, repressed, disregarded shame, shame interred in the body, can be expected to cause a rift or a problem, especially an internal problem.

Avoidance of shame precipitates its interment in the form of cycles or spirals. As mentioned, the unpleasant experience of shame often elicits more shame, especially when perpetuated by responses of guilt or rage. The cyclical nature of shame, that shame induces more shame whether of itself or first perambulating through guilt or rage, manifests in trauma survivors as disturbing forms of repetition compulsion.[115] Understood generally as a psychological phenomenon, repetition compulsion comprises the repetition of a traumatic experience by a survivor of trauma, at least symbolically. Characterized by denial, concealment, and isolation, and part of a dialectical system ensconced with corruption and malevolence, repetition compulsion assumes the role of a "malignant dissociative contagion" according to Sue Grand.[116] Whoever represents the initial corruption claims domination and makes "claims to the truth" that confuse reality and

[115] Trauma can be understood as some event so catastrophic that speaking and communicating appears to be insurmountable. Often trauma creates indelible memories, which are not integrated into a person's conscious life experiences. Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 256.

[116] Sue Grand, *The Reproduction of Evil A Clinical and Cultural Perspective* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 16-17.

seduce the person harmed into a complicated association repeats trauma and perpetuates shame.[117]

The voice that claims truth represents the voice of the perpetrator or dominator, but Grand locates the initial role of destruction in persons and systems that both deny and reinforce shame. Silence emerging from the embroilment between the person being harmed and the perpetrator supports this process. Unnamed shame, unarticulated shame inters itself in bodies, and silence thus becomes a weapon of destruction. Silence around shame inculcated in systems of dominance and control leaves survivors splitting themselves, hiding their shame, and at the same time incapable of escaping its deleterious physical effects.

When trauma happens in childhood, especially in the family of origin, when violence disrupts relationships based on trust and love, a child is left shamed, helpless, and often silenced. Pathologies centered on acquiring safety replace empathetic modes of being, and shame inhabits the body, truncating the possibility for further empathic connection. More trauma correlates with more repetition of that trauma, just as interred shame contributes to more shame. Furthermore, traumatic situations in the family of origin disrupt healthy attachment necessary for the regulation of shame. To be unconnected, or vulnerable, equates to being weak, mortal, and shamed; this is the perpetual place of the targeted victim in many kinds of trauma; vulnerable, ostracized, and potentially stigmatized or shamed, the survivor confronts feelings of inferiority and shame. The sense of wholeness, or inability to tolerate vulnerability, that emerges in

[117] Ibid., 16-17.

situations of successful attachment fails to evolve. Shame becomes a multilayered state of existence, too painful to face, and therefore, shame becomes interred.

The interment of shame constitutes an almost natural phenomenon, even outside of situations of trauma. The affective experience of shame marks vulnerability and self-exposure that, instead of exploring to facilitate attachment, people often deny or evade. Nussbaum confirms this when she aligns shame with the "primitive," what is connected to infantile demands for omnipotence, encapsulated in the idea of a "general neediness and vulnerability."[118] Her sense of primitive shame emerges from the defeat of the narcissistic infant in Tomkins' work, whose shame at rejection lies in the reality of his/her body as vulnerable but craving connection with the caregiver.[119] Shame situates itself at this juncture between the self and the other as it implicates attachment and severs attachment. Shame emerges when one experiences the self as not whole and connects "to the more primitive longing for wholeness" a longing that is fulfilled in attuned relationships.[120] The reality of shame emergence and interplay in attunement provokes this exploration of a more nuanced understanding and interpretation of shame within theological anthropologies.

[118] Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity,* 183.

[119] Ibid., 15.

[120] Ibid., 186.

## Shaped in Shame

Reflected in the title of the dissertation rests a core assumption of this project: rhetoric has the power to shape not only speech and self-expression but also bodies. Later in this work, I turn to rhetoric, writing, and tradition. In this section, my purpose is to clarify what it means to "shape bodies." First, from Pierre Bourdieu's work on *habitus*, I show how the body can be shaped in shame. Then, engaging Tomkins' affect theory, I will explain how I interpret and apply the concept of embodied self-formation through Tomkins' particular way of inflecting *habitus*.

### Habitus

At the center of Pierre Bourdieu's philosophical work lies the assumption that individuals learn bodily. To explain this concept, Bourdieu coined the notion of *habitus*. In his view, *habitus* creates, "what has to be called an *esprit de corps*."[121] Situated between a discourse of particularity and communality, *habitus* stresses that the principle of individual action is based on the social conditions that form and exercise behavior. Thus situated within the concept of *habitus* lies the notion that the body absorbs the social world, internalizes that world, and then reflects it. The social world in this sense shapes the body. Bourdieu uses the notion of shaping bodies much in the same way that he considers the notion of inscribing *habitus* on the body; however, the idea of shaping takes on the concept of progress and development, while inscription implies an indelible

[121] Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations,* 37

mark.[122] In this construction then, *habitus* constitutes an internal state formed by the external environment the interchange through which shapes and is always shaping bodies.

Inscribed on the body, *habitus* constitutes a system of dispositions related to a person's being and doing in the world. *Habitus* "seeks to create the conditions of its fulfillment," despite the specifics of the environment.[123] As such, a person will, unconsciously or outside of rational thought, attempt repeatedly to find situations that accommodate a specific *habitus*. This manifests in the trauma survivor as repetition compulsion and in the various cycles or spirals of shame.

In addition, *habitus* is historically acquired; present and future experiences mark the body.[124] Moreover, *habitus* is inscribed on the body by kinship and social relations and can "survive long after the disappearance of [its] social conditions of production."[125] Social situations and environments (familial, educational, theological) create/inscribe *habitus* on a body, shaping bodies, and enacting what Bourdieu calls a form of "symbolic violence."[126] More powerful than physical violence or power because of more covert operation within social fields, symbolic violence works because it attracts the participation of both the dominant and the dominated. Symbolic violence is "gentle,"

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[122] Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 61. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 69-71.

[123] Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 150.

[124] Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, trans. Michael Lucy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 354.

[125] Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations,* 180.

[126] The idea of "symbolic violence" is a central term in Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination* defined on page 1 and expanded on throughout the text.

"imperceptible," and often invisible."[127] Shaping the body is equally as imperceptible; it happens gradually related to the rhetoric and practices of the traditions people inhabit.

The rational social world represents the supreme force of symbolic violence, which Bourdieu critiques and which is made up of systems of domination illustrated by the elite. *Habitus* as an internalized structure and the physical embodiment of an objective structure denotes this rational social world.[128] Thus, the strength of *habitus,* it merges what is spatially outside (social structures) with what is inside, erasing distinctions between the unconscious and consciousness. Bourdieu refers to art, religion, law and politics as having imposing universal categories where the dominant way of being is "tacitly," and thus unconsciously, "turned into a norm."[129] Presently, social media, including religious sources, exacerbates this phenomenon becoming part of the elite that Bourdieu critiques. For instance, when doctrine established by any elite institution constitute norms, they "brand" the not normal, and consequently the "not normal" converts to be stigmatized, disgusting, and, therefore, full of shame. Not being normal, or exceeding any functional norm, thus constitutes being in shame and thus shaped by shame.

For instance, cultural perceptions and conceptions about social and gender hierarchies that create sexual order result in "a matrix of inferiorization [that] happens in those bodies and minds that contravene the norms."[130] External stimuli shape bodies into

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[127] Ibid., 1.

[128] Nash, "Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction," 433.

[129] Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 72.

the perceived norm. In such a process, confused awareness leads to a disregard of the intuitive affective reactions of the body itself. In such a way, affects subvert consciousness and systems of symbolic violence capitalize on this. The strength of such systems lies in how they become embedded in biology, within bodies, according to affects and gender, respectively. Lodged this way in the body makes systems of violence nearly invulnerable. When symbolic power shapes bodies, a loss ensues: a loss of autonomy, self-hood, and individuality. This loss manifests as shame in the way that Bewes describes: perceiving oneself as something other than he/she knows him/herself to be.

Being shaped in shame also constitutes, according to the idea of *habitus*, interring shame in the body. In his work on Christian formation and Christian speech, Mark D. Jordan articulates this enigma stating that what is more difficult for Christian homosexuals than their being stigmatized by society is their having "absorbed into themselves the shame of the old traditions."[131] Thus, Jordan argues that changing the criminal laws will not erase shame, especially because religious teaching takes place both near home and at home, and not just in removed councils and church committees.[132] Inscribed on the body as a powerful *habitus,* Christian tradition and accompanying practices function as powerful mechanisms in the shaping of the Christian self.[133]

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[130] Ibid., xxi.

[131] Jordan, *Recruiting Young Love*, 58.

[132] Ibid., 58.

[133] Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 141.

Thus, shame as interred and cyclical within the body can be perceived as a disposition of the body, a *habitus*. Shame not only perpetuates itself in the body as further shame from feeling and an awareness of shame, but it is also, as Jordan mentions, absorbed into the body and lives into and is perpetuated within families, groups, and societies. I use the concept of *habitus* as a means of understanding and conveying this absorption of shame and its subsequent interment in the body. Once buried and perpetuated, shame becomes an affective means of orientating individuals to the world.

## Scripts

A heading displayed on the website for the Tomkins Institute communicates what is a stake when shame interred goes unaddressed and unrepaired. It reads, "What we learn from affects becomes programmed as scripts which govern our behavior."[134] The concept of "scripts" typically refers to a set of ordering principles that translate, evaluate, anticipate, and manage scenes, the smallest unit of life experience. Scenes, for Tomkins, resemble photographs or images of past experiences. Either habitual or transient, scenes connect to each other, resulting in magnification into scripts and then into the plot of one's life.[135] The script does not deal with every scene but solidifies according to the power affect affords it. Scripts are thus reinforced by affect despite whether or not they

[134] "What we learn through affects becomes programmed as scripts which govern our behavior," "What Tomkins Said," The Tomkins Institute, accessed August 15, 2014, http://www.tomkins.org/what-tomkins-said/introduction/what-we-learn-through-affects-becomes-programmed-as-scripts-which-govern-our-behavior/.

[135] Silvan Tomkins, *Exploring Affect* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 58 and 318-19.

constellate around every specific scene. Shame as a script that governs behavior is highly problematic.

In accordance with Tomkins' nine innate affect pairs, scripts are continually shaped, modulated, confirmed, or reworked by each other and according to particular stimuli. Like *habitus*, written on the body, scripts illustrate a particular story composed by affects that dramatize particular sequences and organizations of affect. Further, scripts are both learned and shaped according to conditioning over time. For example, initially a baby's crying and flailing in distress resulting from hunger represents behavior inspired by a basic urge; however, after learning that crying results in being fed, a child will cry to solicit food to appease hunger.

> What is important from the point of view of script theory is that the effect of any set of scenes is *indeterminate* until the future happens and either further magnifies or attenuates such experience. The second point is that the consequence of any experience is not singular but plural. There is no single *effect* but rather there are many effects which change in time – what I have called the principle of *plurideterminancy*.[136]

According to Tomkins, any particular experience does not solidify into a script until an additional experience either attenuates it or magnifies it. The effect of a scene perpetuates future experience, expanding into scripts related to repeated behavior that coagulate according to memory, language, or culturally derived scripts. This leads to Tomkins' third principle; "Scenes are magnified not by repetition, but by repetition with a *difference*."[137] The same scene repeated becomes assimilated, regulated, integrated, and attenuated, for good or for ill. A similar scene rather than the same scene reinforces a

[136] Ibid., 325.

[137] Ibid.

particular script. Thus, scripts are incomplete and rely on auxiliary information to form them. In addition, repeated and perpetuated scripts in a person's life generally confirm rather than disaffirm experience.

Nathanson employs Tomkins' script theory to establish his theories about shame. He conceives of shame as including a set of four alternative scripts and creating what he calls a "compass of shame."[138] At each directional point on the compass lies a different script. The oppositional points on the compass constitute what he terms the "poles of shame." There are four poles, which, as Nathanson explains, "function as libraries that house some of the most important affect management scripts in our repertoire."[139] The first pole includes withdrawal or avoidance scripts; the second pole includes "attack other" and "attack self" scripts. All points of the compass interrelate in a kind of grand narrative. The withdrawal and avoidance scripts manifest in two kinds of behavior: violence directed inward, towards the self, or violence directed outwardly, towards another.[140]

To illustrate the compass of shame, Nathanson focuses on violence, sexuality, and shame. He describes how shame not only leads to withdrawal from a specific behavior, in this case, sexuality, but also how shame can also lead to an intensification of that behavior. Violence in general relates to shame varying only in direction – towards the self or towards other. In the following excerpt, Nathanson articulates what kinds of behaviors are evident in self-violence.

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[138] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 30 and 313-315.

[139] Ibid., 314.

[140] Ibid. See also Gilligan, *Violence,* 110-114; Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 3, 5, and 163-5.

> One might think…that shame is only associated with reductions in sexuality. Actually, sexual ardor is cut down by shame affect only when bundled into the *withdrawal* scripts of the compass of shame. Shame as deference, submission, or masochism characterizes the *attack self* pole of the compass; as rape and the sexual exploitation of children it powers a significant part of the *attack other* pole; also does it power a significant fraction of scripts in the *avoidance* library.[141]

As noted above, the libraries of Nathanson's compass function to store the response mechanism to a particular scene or script. The repeated stimulation of affect by similar scenes further strengthens these scripts. Stimulated or triggered by the environment, affects motivate the return to stored behaviors and words to access and then express the response to a particular trigger. Serving like a bridge that connects the body to the mind in a biological feedback loop, affects become dependable.[142] Through repetition, affects strengthen and then dependably appear when triggered. Affects solidify scenes, key components of the feedback loop that constructs scripts. The figuration of particular scripts mirrors *habitus* in that each consists of constellated affects modulated, reinforced, and inscribed as dispositions onto bodies. In order to escape from distinct scripts or a particular *habitus*, relearning or reprogramming must occur. For Bourdieu, altering an ingrained *habitus* requires practice of something contraindicative of that *habitus*. For Tomkins, scripts must be altered, and transformation takes place first at the level of affect.

This consideration of *habitus* and scripts provides a means for understanding how the affect of shame operates to shape the self. In addition, this elucidation of the how habitus and scripts generated by families, institutions, organizations, and external stimuli

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[141] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 426.

[142] Damasio, *Descartes Error,* 128.

shapes bodies introduces a lens through which theological rhetoric and practice accomplish similar shaping, contributing to the formation of the Christian self in shame.

## Conclusion

This chapter lays out the theoretical and analytical terrain from which I will analyze shame within Christian texts and practice. Addressed and explored at the intersection of psychology, neuroscience, and critical theory through affect theory, shame emerges as an influential and potent affect. Characterized by its unpredictability and immediacy, shame influences a body's capacity to act and its capacity to function fully in the unconscious unrecognized by conscious processes. But, first, shame presents itself as a natural, physiological experience.

As an affect, shame makes its initial impact on the body in several ways through scenes, scripts, and as a *habitus*. Preverbal and primal, shame's biological influence on the body ratifies it as a powerful and intimidating modulator of behavior. Shame motivates the body to hide or go inward, to seek some shelter from what is perceived as dangerous, or conversely to explode in anger, to lash out, to violate another body. Shame, masked by guilt, also inhibits empathy, blocking the human experience that enables the development of compassion. Critical in forming interpersonal, familial, and cultural bonds, empathy fosters shame's reparation while it also relates to self-care. Nullified by shame, empathy wavers and cannot be accessed to facilitate repair.

The difficulty this chapter and subsequent chapters address relates to the ability to see how shame emerges in the body according to how society, culture, and Christianity

have constructed it. The challenge to address shame increases because shame embedded in other affective experiences easily eludes comprehension. Preverbal shame, often concealed by other affects including guilt, lies beneath perceptions of the self as humble, vulnerable, and weak and is modulated by disgust. As a result of the inherent difficulties in identifying shame, in distinguishing shame from guilt, and in understanding disgust's function in shame's development, the body continues to be shaped and profoundly influenced by shame.

To summarize, shame, which manifests in the belief that the self or parts of the self are inferior, not only has deleterious effects on the body, but also interferes with empathic connections. When other affects conceal shame, it becomes interred in the body, inhibiting the potential for repair through attachment and instead becoming a self-perpetuating *habitus*. Ruptured by shame spirals and trauma induced cycles, attuned attachment fails to form. When shame operates without amelioration, it interferes with both connections to the other and to God. The Christian self in shame turns away from these connections, which paradoxically operate to ameliorate shame.

Theology as a socially relevant practice has a responsibility to those who feel so shamed that they live in dysregulated states, often alternating between maladaptive behaviors of withdrawal, avoidance, and violence. This responsibility includes thinking about and naming shame with the aim of engaging in practices that facilitate the acknowledgement that shame operates innately in the body pointing towards that to which people are most connected. Attention to innate shame's function would begin to disinter shame, fostering love and attuned attachment rather than perpetuating cycles of

toxic shame, domination, and violence. In this way, instead of the perpetuation of shame or trauma, something radically different could result. The more attention theology devotes to understanding shame's role in fostering or severing attachment to others and to God as well as to comprehending its function in contributing to motivational structures of violence, the more capable tradition and practice will be at nurturing the whole self, in whom shame plays a natural part.

## CHAPTER THREE

## THE COVER-UP

*Shame is arguably something we need to take more seriously, in its productively transformative as well as destructively inhibiting effects.*[1]

Virginia Burrus

Building upon contemporary scholarship that attempts to disentangle Augustine's theology from the way his theology has been appropriated by the Church and Christian tradition,[2] the theme of this chapter focuses on "covering-up" or "concealing" the body in shame. Through an exploration of the idea of covering-up, I locate the body as central to Augustine's theological anthropology. This body exudes affectivity, and set within a dynamic of shame, contains an internal stigma of sin that manifests externally as shamed body parts. Yet, Augustine's conception of shame simultaneously diminishes and acknowledges the body and affectivity. Augustine's theology not only perceives shame on and in the body but also situates shame as central to the human self. In this chapter, I explore how rereading Augustine via affect theory offers, in relation to his own intellectual inheritance, a way of understanding how the Christian self in shame attaches to God.

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[1] Burrus, *Saving Shame*, 4.

[2] See for instance, Burrus, Jordan, and MacKendrick, *Seducing Augustine*. These writers insist that more accurate understandings and readings of St. Augustine, especially in relation to the body and sexuality, help to dismantle the appropriation of Augustine by the Christian tradition and western culture that uses his work to marginalize sexuality and bodies. Their reading of Augustine considers his work and life in total including his historical context, his own inconsistencies, personal struggles, and/or his actual method of writing in order to formulate a more thorough view of his stance on the body in Christianity.

Here, I turn an affective lens to Augustine's seminal text *City of God* in order to facilitate the identification of shame theologically, and more specifically, as an affect fundamental to human existence. Set temporally amidst the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 AD and intended as a defense of the "glorious City of God" to the unbeliever, *City of God* comprises Augustine's attempt to defend Christianity against the pagans while persuading Christians to maintain their faith and seek connection to God. In his defense of both Christianity and the Christian's primary relationship with God, Augustine seeks to understand human suffering, a preoccupation that leads him to examine humanity's condition after the biblical Fall from Eden. His interpretation of the Fall, along with the precarious position of Christianity at the time, deeply influences his conceptions of the ideal Christian self.[3]

Contemporary work in affect theory, especially regarding shame and patterns of attachment, frame and undergird the exploration of shame in this chapter. The primary attachment considered is Augustine's notion of fidelity to God. In theories of attachment, affects, particularly shame, are regulated in what is called psychobiological or neurological attunement.[4] Shame results when attunement fails, known also as the partial truncation of interest-excitement. Thus, attachment must exist and then fail in order for shame to occur. Dysregulated shame results, and the inability to tolerate shame leads to shame's interment. To begin to disinter shame requires recognizing its presence and

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[3] See Margaret R. Miles, *Reading Historical Theology: Before, During, and After Augustine* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2008), and Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 299-312.

[4] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*, 79.

aliveness in the self and seeking repair of the interpersonal bridge that shame initially severed. According to Elspeth Probyn, even though it seems "counterintuitive" to link shame to pleasure, joy, and connection, shame "floods us when we feel unlovable."[5] It follows that a restoration of connection will lessen the overwhelming shame affect.

In my reading of Augustine, I suggest that Augustine locates a tension between the city of God and the earthly city, between the divine and the human, in the embodied affect of shame. Shame, as a central affect in *City of God*, is also the source of suffering and the primary symbol of the Fall. The core trope that Augustine employs to convey the fall into suffering and earthly life is a shamed body, concretized in Adam and Eve's bodily act of responding to the knowledge of their own nakedness by covering-up their *pudenda* with fig leaves. This pivotal scene images both shame, as ashamedness at nudity, and the initial stage of covering-up and interring shame. In paradise, or the city of God, the affect of shame exists as part of nature but remains covered by grace. Grace thus attends to shame, regulating it. This is not the case in the earthly city where affective forces like shame seize bodies. This presence of fractious, uncontrollable affects in the earthly city often renders these bodies dysregulated. To reduce the affective intensity of earthly existence and restore some of the equilibrium disrupted by the Fall, Augustine appeals to humanity to reach for connection with the divine. In Augustine's construction, shame motivates this connection: Adam and Eve must turn to God after they find themselves in shame with shamed parts, if there is to be any hope for them. Seeking God

[5] Although this is not the only condition for shame, it is a thoroughly explored one by Wurmser in *Torment me, but don't Abandon Me,* and in Nathanson, *Pride and Shame*, 165.

in lieu of hiding from God would bring the human state of shame out into the open, fully exposed, and yet they hide. With this state in mind, I question, through the lens of affect theory and its assertions about attachment, how shame as Augustine expresses it both facilitates and inhibits attachment.

To explore this question, I take a deeper look at Book XIV, chapters 11-17 in *City of God*, where he employs the Edenic narrative to adjudicate and support his claims about shame. The story of the Fall, as Augustine interprets it, formulates a fall out of relation and into the knowledge of shame, embodied by the act of covering-up. I discuss how Augustine's interpretation of the Fall leads him to identify shame and the shamed body as a bridge between the two cities, personified by Christ, who offers the human imagination a vision of prelapsarian life. Augustine tells a crucial story about this transmuted shame,[6] locating it in the body as an affect related to the knowledge of nakedness and on the body as *pudenda* or shamed parts. Yet two kinds of shame become apparent in Augustine. The first, a kind of natural or true shame, articulated as an innate shame in affect theory, attends to attuned attachment and fosters the original most primal connection, to God for Augustine, to the other in affect theory. The second occurs as a result of knowledge;

[6] Work on shame in the *Confessions* has been conducted by Virginia Burrus see "Bodies, Desires, Confessions: Shame in Plotinus, Antony, and Augustine," in *Shame between Punishment and Penance: The Social Usages of Shame in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Bénédicte Sère and Jörg Wettlaufer (Firenze: Sismel, 2013), 23-48. In "Bodies, Desires, Confessions," 45, Burrus posits that in *Confessions* Augustine is not "ashamed to be in a body," but is instead "ashamed to will his own voice, to lay claim to the power of words to do what they say: 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.'" Her work on shame in this piece is read with affect theory, especially through the work of Eve Kofosky Sedgwick. A more thorough analysis of shame occurs in her text, *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects,* where Burrus argues that the early Christian tradition has something to teach contemporary society about shame. I concur with her argument about shame that extends from a reading of *Confessions* to the *City of God*.

Adam and Eve know that they are naked and feel shamed. This second toxic shame, for Augustine, perverts human life and contributes to diminished self-worth. In affect theory, this shame assumes a different physiological intensity than the true shame and acquires a more toxic role in the human self. When Augustine consigns to the practice of covering the body a transmuted sense of shame prior to the "lust" for knowledge that both Adam and Eve experienced, he marks for readers the central affect that distinguishes the material world, the city of humanity, from the spiritual world, the city of God: shame.[7]

Clarifying Augustine's definition of pride also reveals how shame emerges in his writing. He constructs his ideas about pride according to Aristotle's definitions as either a virtue[8] or as resulting in shame.[9] Accomplishment and self-worth, akin to pride in Augustine, are directed by and derived from God, and only God. This nuanced sense of pride emerges in his notion of humility and closely relates to a right relationship with God. Affect theorists articulate this idea of a right relationship as an attuned one. This affinity constitutes self-worth for Augustine. While Augustine primarily focuses on pride as *hubris* related to Aristotle's presumption that it incurs shame, he absorbs the latter sense of pride into a right relationship with God.

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[7] See Augustine, "The Literal Meaning of Genesis," in *On Genesis,* ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New York City Press, 2002), 9.10:16, "However it would be better, more becoming to believe that the 'ensouled' bodies of those two established in Paradise, not yet having been condemned by the law of death, were such that they did not have the same lust for carnal pleasure as these bodies of ours do now, derived as they are from the propagation of death."

[8] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thompson (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2004), 3: 1123a.35 – 1124a.14.

[9] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1991), 2.2: 1378 b.

Thus, I examine Augustine's attention to shame in order to show how his rhetoric creates a Christian self that struggles with the guilt of disobedience, but whose shame in having transgressed because of a perceived deficiency far outweighs guilt. Augustine embeds shame in the Christian self, interpreted as an affect that dominates behavior, internally and externally. Related to sexuality and the sexualized body, shame directs the body, inspired by pride to follow its own will rather than the will of God. For Augustine, this is not the pride of self-esteem or self-worth commonly associated with pride today, but *hubris*, the boastful pride that seeks power and dominion. Augustine contrasts this pride with humility and punishes it with shame.

In the process, he develops a theological anthropology in which humans are inherently shamed and hide shame by covering bodies. In addition, Augustine implores (his appeal approaches a demand) humanity to reconnect with God. Reattachment to God is a postlapsarian phenomenon, articulated via affect and attachment theory as an attachment to the primal source of life.

## Edenic Attunement

The Edenic narrative assumes a key role in Augustine's diagnosis of the human condition, and consideration of it through an affective lens illuminates shame.[10] For

[10] Augustine's reading of Genesis in the *City of God* (c. 416) proceeds from a large body of his own writing on the creation story including most prominently, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees* and *Unfinished Literary Commentary on Genesis,* both in *On Genesis,* ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New York City Press, 2002)*; Confessions* (397-401), where he most clearly relates the story to his own becoming and conversion; and *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (401-416), a literal interpretation to compliment his earlier figurative interpretations in response to the Manichees. For this history see Peter Brown and Michael Fiedrowicz, "General Introduction," in *On*

Augustine, the drama of the Fall serves as a founding narrative of the etiology of human sin. Augustine begins with a prelapsarian description of Adam and Eve's affectively attuned condition in Eden, a condition of unsullied love for God and each other. At the outset, Adam and Eve exist in pure bliss, in a state characterized by affect regulation and, thus, a lack of pain and suffering. In Eden, the love that Adam and Eve feel for each other expresses itself fully including sexual intimacy, which occurs free from conflicting desires, the burden of sin, and toxic shame. Pleasure and interest, in God and each other, abound. In paradise, the material and the spiritual harmonize as one. Both outward or material and inward or spiritual needs are fulfilled.

In this place where the material and spiritual function in unison, humanity possesses only good will.[11] In Augustine's terms, God made "man upright" and capable of good at God's bequest.[12] Furthermore, for Augustine, all affects, including desire,[13] are ultimately directed by and toward God. He believes that Adam and Eve initially obey God's demand not to eat from the forbidden tree as a result of their connection with and attunement to God. Therefore, at the earliest roots of human existence, affects did not

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*Genesis,* ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New York City Press, 2002). Every effort at exegesis of this story illustrates maturation in Augustine's thought and further development of his theological anthropology.

[11] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.11: 568.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Teresa Brennan discusses the separation of "desire" from "affects" in the twentieth century, a division that would not have held for Augustine, see *Transmission of Affect* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), 4. My usage of the word "desire" often conveys it as an affect, which I think relates to interest-excitement.

oppose human will as they were aligned with God's will.[14] Adam and Eve existed as "one flesh;" both were naked, and neither was ashamed.

Interrupting this harmonious balance in Eden, the Devil, whom Augustine labels an "arrogant angel," refuses to subject himself to God and, motivated by hubristic pride, rejects God initiating detachment.[15] In Augustine's narration, "envious" of Adam and Eve, the Devil ventures to destroy their harmonious state.[16] The Devil's "ambition was to worm his way, by seductive craftiness, into the consciousness of man," selecting as his "mouthpiece" a serpent.[17] Serving as a material representation of evil, according to Augustine, the serpent "with his slippery body, moving along in tortuous twists and turns" has a "deceitful conversation with the woman."[18] The Devil seduces Eve to eat from the tree, and she in turn encourages Adam, who also eats from the tree. Subsequently, both, "taken captive by their sin and entangled in the snares of the Devil," effectively detach from God.[19]

Augustine portrays this ensnarement dimensionally and sequentially in terms of attachment. First, an act of evil will takes place. This act of evil will is the original evil,

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[14] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.12: 571.

[15] Ibid., 14:11: 569.

[16] Augustine does not locate the Devil as directly oppositional to God, and herein lies his argument against the Manicheans. He articulates this clearly in Book 11:13, where he says that the Devil fell from the "truth" related to God. It was not that the Devil was originally unconnected from that truth. Augustine, *City of God,* 14.11: 569.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 569-70.

[19] Ibid., 14.12: 571.

or secret sin, demarcating the fatal "falling away" from the good will that God created. As a result, Adam and Eve's connection to God is severed.[20] Giving meaning to the original evil, Augustine writes that "man regards himself in his own light and turns away from that light which would have made himself a light if he would have set his heart on it. The evil came first, in secret, and the result was the other evil, which was committed in the open."[21] In other words, the other evil, or subsequently open and more obvious sin ensues as a substantive act: the more overt behavior of eating from the tree. Thus, detachment from God leads to the struggle with all such subsequent acts, which have the inevitable potential to entangle with evil having fallen away from God's will.

Incurring evil will amounts to a loss of personal control, and the state of attunement Adam and Eve enjoyed transpires into affective and somatic dysregulation. From this point forward, Adam and Eve, along with their progeny, succumb to desire, fractious affects, and uncontrollable evil will. Their dysregulation marks the moving away from God reflected first when Adam and Eve deflect and deny responsibility for their sin. Adam blames Eve; Eve blames the serpent. Neither seeks God's pardon, nor turns to God to reclaim the lost bond, and so each abandons grace. According to Augustine, in pride and self-love, they deny "any entreaty for healing,"[22] interpreted by Augustine as a connection with and reattachment to God.

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[20] Ibid., 14.11: 568.

[21] Ibid., 14.13: 573.

[22] Ibid., 14.14: 574.

Pride, modeled by the devil, engenders Adam and Eve's voluntary desertion of God along with their self-reliance and self-complacency in regard to God. Pride spurs the evil will, "darkened and chilled," which motivates the evil act, or the refusal to connect to God.[23] Augustine asserts that pride "is a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation," the root of every form of sin.[24] In fact, for Augustine, the will itself is "the evil tree which bore evil fruit."[25] Augustine further asserts that it is the "man himself who was that tree, in so far as his will was evil."[26] The evil will is thus an unnatural (not of God) "defect," existing only in nature, created out of nothing, not out of that which the "creator begot out of himself."[27] And the generated evil erupts in all subsequent evil deeds. When this evil will engenders the evil act, the will has fallen away from its true being related to and attuned with God. However, Augustine accounts for this fall due to the self's original creation out of nothing, thus attributing nothing evil to God.[28] Preceded by a turn towards the self in pride and detaching the self from God, discontent brings humanity nearer to its original nothingness.

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[23] Ibid.,14.13: 572.

[24] Ibid., 571.

[25] Ibid., 572.

[26] Ibid., 14.11: 568.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 14.13: 572.

After Adam and Eve turn away from God and succumb to misdirected desire, "The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked."[29] This newfound realization of their nakedness parallels their dysregulated affects articulated as an acquisition of an uncontrollable will and a spiritual loss of grace. This does not mean, as Augustine recounts, that before the evil will they were blind, but part of their prelapsarian existence included their being cloaked in a "garment of grace," which they failed to "recognize" as a blessing that disenabled "their members" or sexual organs from knowing how to rebel against God.[30] Grace did not simply veil shame but inhibited the body from even knowing how to disconnect from God and from experiencing shame as toxic.

After Adam and Eve rebel by eating from the forbidden tree, God tries to find them. Adam answers regarding his whereabouts in Genesis 3:10: "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." The combined acts of turning away from God and hiding after they know that they are naked reveal their shame. With knowledge of their newfound shamed nature, Adam and Eve "[sew] together fig leaves and [make] aprons for themselves."[31] The sewing of the fig leaves memorializes the loss of the garment of grace. It was only grace that had "prevented their bodily nakedness from causing them any embarrassment."[32] Grace prevents embarrassment in Eden because grace initially

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[29] Augustine quoting Genesis 3:9, *City of God,* 14.17: 579.

[30] *City of God,* 14.17: 578.

[31] Ibid., 579.

[32] Ibid., 578.

immobilizes evil will, or misdirected desire. Grace does not prevent shame. Insofar as shame is a natural state, grace accommodates shame and directs shame to God. In this way, the cloak of grace signifies attunement with God, evidencing a primal attachment and ensuring a harmonious somatic balance. The impulse to hide their bodies, detaching from instead of turning to God, conveys the loss of grace, expressed as Adam and Eve's being "stripped" of grace. So stripped, they feel an amplified sense of shame instigated by the severed connection to God.

Adam and Eve respond to the loss of grace and their newly realized uncontrollable *pudenda* by feeling more shame at being exposed. The opening of the eyes, Augustine explains, indicates not enablement to see, but an enablement to *know* what they relinquished, primarily grace and the innocence of the secure attachment. Both ensured continuity and stability in Eden. Further, the possession of knowledge becomes for Augustine a curse, since he prefers nescience and obedience to God over consciousness, primarily because ignorance as simplicity frees humanity from evil will and ensures the prelapsarian attachment.

Augustine's diagnosis of this newfound knowledge of shame, concretized by detachment from God, emerges in pride and guilt, which receive particular punishments. First, he writes that "there appeared in the movements of their body a certain indecent novelty, which made nakedness shameful."[33] This punishment tragically reflects that humanity can no longer "become spiritual even in [the] flesh" but becomes instead

[33] Ibid.

"carnal" even in the mind.[34] This carnality, tantamount to a lack of control over the self, or being "at odds" with oneself, emerges as non-compliant, dysregulated flesh, taking on the properties of a lust that surges uncontrollably through the body. Second, they suffer death, the mortal signification of the break in unity between the body and soul that Augustine mourns. As a result, hope for the self of any return to paradise evolves only in reunification and reattachment through the resurrection, which restores unity and subsumes shame in a reconnection with God.

Augustine thus exposes the capacity of pride and evil will to redirect Adam and Eve's interest or desire for God. Their sin, which refutes God's order of obedience, ushers in all subsequent sin and alters human nature incommensurably. From this point onwards, Adam and Eve, along with their progeny, engage in a perpetual effort to regulate affect. Thus, the effect of the first sin contributes to the "violent and conflicting emotions" that plague human life and subject human nature to lust, pride, and variations of shame, as they move toward "the process of decay" and eventual death.[35] Augustine concludes Book 17 by conveying a similar message, "Thus modesty, from a sense of shame, covered what was excited to disobedience by lust, in defiance of a will which had been condemned for the guilt of disobedience; and from then onwards the practice of

[34] Ibid., 14.15: 574-5.

[35] Ibid., 14.12: 571.

concealing the pudenda has become a deep-rooted habit in all peoples, since they all derive from the same stock."[36]

Thus, Augustine labels the body as shamed, and this perception of the body as shameful has been, until recently, a theological legacy, allowing his more critical stance intrinsic to shame in theological anthropology to go relatively unnoticed. Yet the true significance of shame in Augustine's conclusion parallels my own assertion that shame rests internal to the human person. Augustine names shame, consigning guilt to its most appropriate role as a response to behavior; he does not confuse the two affects, as I will show Niebuhr does later. As a result, Augustine locates shame as central to the self, always existing, but emerging with negative force when the prelapsarian bond with God breaks in the Edenic narrative. No longer attuned with God, shame contributes to the suffering in human life, and Augustine's conception of life as a process of healing can only be fulfilled in realization that in shame the individual must return to God.

## Falling out of Relation

Augustine is preoccupied in *City of God*, as he is in *On Genesis* and the *Confessions*, with making sense of the Fall. He struggles with the fall out of relationship with God and seeks passionately to restore this connection. Adam and Eve experience a loss of innocence and harmony characteristic of the city of God thereby plummeting to the earthly city where, in contrast, conflict marks existence. Fractious affects, enticement from evil, pride, concupiscence, and shame contribute to the conflict. Ultimately, the fall

[36] Ibid., 14.17: 579.

into the human, worldly condition of the earthly city represents a fall into shame that severs attachment.

Attachment is wrongly directed in the earthly city. As Augustine asserts, "In one city love of God has been given first place, in the other, love of the self."[37] The fall out of proper attachment incurs pain. According to my reading, this suffering, theoretically constructed as concupiscence, can also be understood as the knowledge of shame. Assuming greater intensity than the natural state of shame in grace, this knowledge of shame further shames Adam and Eve, contributing to pathologies, articulated by Augustine as guilt, sin, pride, and lust.

Exposed and with open eyes, Adam and Eve see, understand, and realize their nakedness, as a sign of losing their prelapsarian grace and innocence. This disaster amounts to acquiring uncontrollable bodies and desires, along with the struggle to regulate affects like shame evidenced in Augustine's terms by the human entrapment in concupiscence. Their secret sin of turning away from God in pride incurs exposure and embarrassment, prompting the gestures of shame – those of hiding and covering-up. Both guilt and shame result. Guilt is a product of the turn from God that precipitated the fall, while shame is internalized with the knowledge gained upon exposure in the act.

To summarize, for Augustine, sin entails a turn from a secure paradisiacal immutability dependent on God towards the insecure capricious relationships of the human world and unprecedented, uncontrollable carnality in the earthly city. In this world, bodies, vulnerable to desire, suffering, and death, seek connection and intimacy, but they

[37] Ibid., 14.13: 573.

fail if God ceases to be the object of attachment. This uncontrollable, material body, lured away from God by insuppressible affects, expresses both a desire to know (or eat from the forbidden tree) and a desire for self-importance or power manifested in pride. Desire and interest, which should be directed to God, when misdirected links to concupiscence, pulsing through the *pudenda*, the visible parts of shame, overwhelming human rationality. The consequence of sin is shame in the form of embarrassment, insubordination of self to the Devil's temptation, while sin's root forms as the bond with the material world initiated by the woman's seduction by the Devil.[38] When Eve accepts the serpent's enticement and eats of the tree, she immediately becomes, like the serpent, detached from God and attached to the material world. Adam choice reflects Eve's choice. In the end, carnality and materiality seduce each.

"Distracted and tossed about by violent and conflicting emotions,"[39] Adam and Eve fall into affective experience, which they struggle to balance or regulate. For Augustine, this state of affectivity is "less real,"[40] less fixed, and more impermanent than the state of grace and attunement characteristic of paradise. Here, forces erupt from the body, as contingent, unpredictable, and overflowing affects, signifying dysregulation. These forces direct the human body towards an object, often unconsciously. For instance,

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[38] See also Augustine, *Literal Meaning* Book, 11, .31.40 where Augustine's response to *Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked* is, "So now the body would no longer be simply 'ensouled' or animal, capable in due course of being changed, if they had remained obedient, into a more 'enspirited' condition without death intervening; but from now on it would be a body of death, in which the law in the members fights back against the law of the mind (Rom 7:24.23)." There is also certain potentiality that is lost due to their "bold, shameless curiosity" and their being "greedy for fresh experiences" (11, .31.41).

[39] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.12: 571.

[40] Ibid., 14.13: 572.

it is affectivity in the form of interest in the Devil that blindsides Eve, then Adam's subsequent interest in Eve that does the same to him. Misdirected desire provokes their attachment to that which God has forbidden, and they consent to the wiles of the Devil almost without resistance. Both emerge and arrive at a new state of reality when their "desires become mediated through attachments to modes of life to which they rarely remember consenting, at least initially."[41]

This illustrates what Lauren Berlant details as "affective realism," Adam and Eve motivated by desire or concupiscence, and somewhat oblivious, eat from the tree. Almost at once, their innocence transmutes through pride and concupiscence into shame. A sense of surprise erupts at their recognition of this newfound state, which Augustine blames on the individual's attachment to him/herself rather than to God: "When [man] had turned toward himself, his being was less real than when he adhered to Him who exists in a supreme degree."[42] This self-attachment constitutes a distortion of the original attachment to God, and the distortion relates directly to the knowledge and toxicity of shame.

For Augustine, then, the fall into affective experience constitutes a fall into shame, because "shame marks the break in connection" to the primal and prelapsarian existence in relationship with God and with the other, even harmony within the self.[43] And as an act of body prostration, falling reflects shame. The prelapsarian sexual, regulated body Adam

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[41] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 52.

[42] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.13: 572.

[43] Probyn, *Blush*, 13.

and Eve enjoyed in Eden becomes an earthly body, full of shame and covered by shame as a result of refuting God. Dysregulated by the knowledge of shame, Adam and Eve suffer punishments: they must hide their own shamed bodies, live with uncontrollable affects, and forfeit eternal life. Covering-up the body results directly from the Fall and locates painful shame as the central affect that distinguishes the city of God from the earthly city. In fact, the primary difference in the two cities is not just shame or the body, but the body in shame. This body in shame emerges from Augustine's conceptualizations highlighted by the Fall. The fall away from God thus constitutes a fall out of relation that elicits shame. It is not that shame did not exist before the Fall, but after the connection with God is severed, Adam and Eve know they have shame because they experience it affectively. With the stripping of grace, the garment that regulated shame, the maladaptive qualities of shame in and on the body assemble and thrive. Characterized by the lack of harmony inherent in a postlapsarian existence, this shamed state is thus misattuned. Viewed through the lens of affect theory, earthly life marks a drastic diminution in interest-excitement, joy, and positive affect experienced in the eyes of God.

## Shame Emerges

In his construction of the Christian self, unable to securely attach, Augustine inters shame in the body, while simultaneously marking the body with shame. Described affectively as dysregulated, the body cannot share in the secure, attuned prelapsarian

attachment to God, but instead appears insecure, disorganized, and avoidant.[44] Evidence of this uncontrollable affectivity, the exposed *pudenda* or visible sexual organs on the body signify lust that precipitates shame.

## The Internal Mark: Uncontrollable Will

Externally provoked by the Devil, but situated internally, the uncontrollable will, misdirected and inclined away from God, becomes an internal blemish illustrative of a depraved, affective humanity. Indicating a wrong inherent within the self, a stigma that marks humankind, this wound articulated by Augustine as concupiscence, or lust, functions within a logic of shame.[45]

In shame, the self perceives itself as corrupt, immoral, and depraved. Marked by the stigma of evil will, the self understands its position as being observed as deficient. As is the case for affective shame, this observation takes place within the logic of exposure. For Augustine, deficiency evolves when Adam and Eve come to understand themselves in a particular way; they know (and see) that they have shame. Their knowledge initiates shame in what Schore describes as a rapid transition from a "preexisting high arousal positive hedonic state to a low arousal negative hedonic state."[46] Adam and Eve's prelapsarian innocence emulates affect theory's infant who, with the interested caregiver,

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[44] See Peter Fonagy, *Affect Theory and Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac, 2004) for an in depth analysis of the idea of attunement, along with the integration of affect theory, attachment theory, and psychoanalysis.

[45] Scholars often use the terms "concupiscence" and "lust" interchangeably. See Burrus, Jordan, and MacKendrick, *Seducing Augustine*, and Brown, *The Body and Society*.

[46] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*, 203.

experiences pleasure, but with the detached caregiver perceives something wrong in the self.

The seat of inherited deformity, which plagues the Christian life, surfaces in Augustine's rhetoric as "concupiscence."[47] Having movement and capacity to excite the body,[48] concupiscence taints Adam and Eve from the inside. As an internal stigma, it spreads as a debilitating sickness or wound from generation to generation, defining an affective state that, since the Fall, all subsequent human generations share. As a part of the new fallen character of humankind, concupiscence resembles an internal mark of shame and signifies an inherited spiritual disorder. Concupiscence shares qualities of shame in more contemporary shame literature, which delineates shame as a "soul wound,"[49] a "sickness of the soul,"[50] or as a "sleeper" in psychopathology.[51] Deeply internal, defining a state of being, concupiscence and shame function as intense internal forces that motivate and direct human behavior.

Concupiscence overpowers mental alertness, overwhelms the "intellectual sentries," and disturbs the whole self.[52] Thus, claiming power over the body, externally and internally, concupiscence interferes with the intellect and, refusing to "be a servant"

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[47] Peter Burnell, "Concupiscence and Moral Freedom in Augustine and Before Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995): 50.

[48] Timo Nisula, *Augustine and the Function of Concupiscence* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 44 and 97.

[49] Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame,* 2nd ed. (New York: Springer, 1996), 5 and 24.

[50] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 387.

[51] Block Lewis, "Introduction," 1.

[52] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.16: 577.

of the will, provokes shame.[53] Shame similarly overwhelms, as Schore asserts, acting as a brake to the arousal system.[54] This sense of shame as a brake to arousal is precisely how Augustine employs the concept of shame. Shame serves as the response to concupiscence. Concupiscence instigates the uncontrollability of the will and motivates that *will to turn away from* God. Flesh, Augustine asserts, which had been subject to the will, "now gives us trouble through its non-compliance," and God does not need our service as "we need the service of our body, so that what we receive is punishment for ourselves."[55] In one form, shame serves as that punishment disrupting interest and breaking connections. Death represents punishment in another form, the severest method of severing attachments in human life. From this severing, at least for Augustine, lies the hope of bodily resurrection, where the self is to be "with the Lord forever" in a renewal of attachment.[56] The alternative, for Augustine, leaves "the ungodly" walking around "in circles."[57] Read alongside affect theory, these circles represent the pernicious cycles of unaddressed shame. In resurrection, Augustine preserves the entire body, including presumably innate shame. He asserts of this bodily resurrection that "even if a body is incorruptible, such as a body as is promised to the saints at the resurrection, still, although this quality of incorruptibility is something which cannot be lost, the body is not identical

[53] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.16: 577.

[54] Schore, *Affect Regulation and Repair of the Self,* 162.

[55] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.15: 576.

[56] Ibid., 12.14: 489.

[57] Ibid.

with this incorruptibility, since the corporeal substance remains."[58] Thus, shame remains, yet in resurrection of the body, it does not impede attachment.

While shame acts as a "brake" to arousal, it also evokes the inner experience of pain. The human responds, according to Augustine, seeking amelioration or eradiation of pain through means not generally associated with God. The earthly objects of desire act as "pseudo-nourishment," taking God's place and forming attachments perpetuated through compulsive, repeated behavior.[59] After Adam and Eve, humanity tries repeatedly to eradicate shame by affiliating with worldly and other external things. In Augustinian terms, they attempt to direct concupiscence, but their affective desire disenables them to direct it correctly.

Although, concupiscence is not shame, it functions within a similar logic. Both signify an inherent woundedness. However, concupiscence binds to shame in Augustine. Shame surrounds the sexual act that concupiscence provokes. He writes that "the sexual act itself, which is performed with such lust, seeks privacy."[60] Only after a realization of shame does any effort to hide sex from God exist. In fact, Augustine restores sex in bodily resurrection as a natural part of attachment, to God and to others. Only in detachment from God does sex become hidden.

As "an agenda perpetuated on the body rather than instigated by the body," concupiscence "includes all the debilitating forms of anxious grasping – whether it

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[58] Ibid., 10.10: 441.

[59] Miles, *Reading Historical Theology*, 97-98.

[60] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.18: 579.

pursues the objects of power, possessions or sex."[61] Lust "of any kind" manifests in humanity's search for pleasure in hopes that such pleasure will eradicate pain.[62] Augustine generalizes both concupiscence and lust as terms for desire, although they are not precisely the same thing. Concupiscence includes lust and desire but describes more of a state of being than an action. When Augustine uses the word "lust" he uses it almost always unfavorably: "we have the lust for vengeance, called anger; the lust for possession of money, called greed; the lust for victory at any price, called obstinacy; the lust for boasting, called vanity."[63] However, desire can be constructive when it is directed toward God; this sense of desire corresponds to the interest-excitement of Tomkins' nine affects, constructing and maintaining connections, drawing the self towards an object, and leaving the self open to experiencing shame.

Unlike Augustine's concept of lust, concupiscence relates directly to incitement and stimulation of the sexual organs; unless lust lacks specification of its object, then it also refers specifically to the arousal of the *pudenda*.[64] Augustine believes firmly that this arousal – concupiscence flowing through the body inciting the *pudenda* – needs to be tempered through submission to God, and all desire directed rather toward God as an object.[65] For Augustine, desire not directed toward God is desire wrongly directed. The

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[61] Miles, *Reading Historical Theology,* 101.

[62] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.15: 576.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 577.

[65] Burrus, Jordan, and MacKendrick, *Seducing Augustine*, 101.

resulting concupiscence manifests as the uncontrollable *pudenda* or shamed body parts, for which one should feel ashamed. Thus, the body bears the burden and the consequences of the soul's disobedience.

## External Mark: The *Pudenda*

For Augustine, the internal mark of concupiscence manifests externally through the *pudenda*.[66] *Pudenda* belie, reveal, and signify sensual desire, concupiscence, pulsing through the body. The involuntary movement of the body actualized in the *pudenda* is the punishment for desire wrongly directed. Augustine insists, "It is right, therefore, to be ashamed of this lust."[67] But this is not enough for Augustine. Not only does the internal mark of desire as concupiscence incur shame, but the external manifestation of that mark in *pudenda* also constitutes a corporeal extension of that shame. Augustine continues, "it is right that the members which [lust] moves or fails to move by its own right, so to speak, and not in complete conformity to our decision, should be called *pudenda* ('parts of shame'), which they were not called before man's sin."[68]

Thus the uncontrolled and uncontrollable movement of the *pudenda*, or shameful member, signifies the disease humanity carries, the etiology of which is concupiscence.[69]

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[66] Rosemary Radford Reuther, "Augustine: Sexuality, Gender, and Women," in *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine*, ed. Judith Stark (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 56. According to Reuther, concupiscence is a state especially projected onto women, whose bodies are responsible for stimulating the sin of concupiscence in the male.

[67] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.17: 578.

[68] Ibid.

Amplifying shame, Augustine talks about a "sense of shame" embodied in covering the *pudenda*, the impugned parts provoked by lust. Body parts represent shame and should be covered as they precipitate a sense of shame. In either case, for Augustine, shame both is covered, as the *pudenda* are covered, and covers-up, as the fig leaves cover the *pudenda*. The dynamic instituted in Augustine's text posits what is secret against what is exposed. Between the covering and uncovering belongs the body shaped in shame.

## Intensity

Augustine's complex articulation of shame as intertwined with the wound of concupiscence and the evil will, which inspires knowledge of shame, thus establishes shame as an affect that defines human affective life and the possibility of shame as toxic. The condition Augustine presents correlates with three major types of shame affects, as they are understood in contemporary thinking.[70] In the first type, the affect of shame evokes anxiety, which manifests in the fear of punishment, or the severing of attachments. The first affective experience of Adam and Eve reflects this shame as they hide from God naked, afraid, and ashamed of their disobedient act. However, simple shame anxiety evolves into a more intense, complex affective structure in the second type of shame, which requires two parts: 1) that some expectation of self (conscious or unconscious) fails to be fulfilled, and 2) that "the inner wishful *image* of the self be 'betrayed' setting

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[69] Tianyue Wu, "Shame in the Context of Sin: Augustine on the Feeling of Shame in the De Civitate Dei," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 74, no. 1 (2007): 23.

[70] See Wurmser, "Shame: The Veiled Companion of Narcissism," 68, where he states these as "simple shame anxiety; shame as a complex affective and cognitive reaction pattern; and shame as a character attitude preventing dangerous exposure."

in motion a self-critical, self-punishing, and reparative process."[71] Adam and Eve both fail to meet expectations set forth by God, and their self-punishing and reparative process entails covering-up the *pudenda* and hiding. Aware of being exposed, this second type of shame plays a dominant role in the character of Adam and Eve since shame situates itself both on and in their bodies. In the third case, the character attitude preventing dangerous exposure entails a refusal, even a fear to attach. This represents the deepest most serious problem of shame. Entrapped, the self creates further isolation, and shame intensifies in the forms of cycles. Continually dysregulated, shame becomes toxic and plays a prominent role the "etiology of all primitive psychopathologies and psychosomatic diseases."[72]

## The Gestures of Shame

When Augustine conveys the story of the Fall, and more specifically, when he details Adam and Eve's response to the *pudenda*, he recounts their behavior in ways that I identify as gestures of shame. Adam and Eve, following the Devil, "turn away" from God; they hide, and they cover-up. These bodily gestures that Augustine describes correlate with the corporeal responses to shame established in affect theory. Shame reduces facial communication: the eyes turn down; the head and sometimes the upper

[71] Ibid., 72.

[72] Schore, *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*, 248.

torso drop or turn away from observing eyes; and blushing often occurs.[73] As kinesthetic articulations of the body, gestures reflect interior life, and in this case, the gestures indicate interred shame.

Gestures not only signify an inner experience, but they also evoke particular visceral and affective states. Taking place within the logic of self-exposure, the gestures Augustine describes can be seen as constituting the movement inherent in shame's logic to hide. Functioning within a logic of exposure, the gestures demonstrate how humanity turns towards its own light and "turns away from that light" which is God's.[74] The result is a hiding and covering-up, which secondarily signifies that sex is "accompanied by a feeling of shame."[75] Before the Fall, this "right action" of promulgation was not concerned with escaping "the light of the eye's vision," presumably in shame.[76] Augustine's diagnosis of the self in shame leads him to advise how humanity should behave, prescribing gestures of shame to ameliorate or suture the wound of concupiscence and to increase human connection to God, to combat the turning away, hiding, and covering-up. He articulates these gestures in terms of humility.

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[73] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 352.

[74] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.13: 573.

[75] Ibid., 14.18: 580.

[76] Ibid.

## Turning Away

In the Edenic narrative, shame emerges initially in the turn-away from God. While Augustine does not tie shame directly to this gesture, but rather describes it as a result of pride, it cannot be dissociated from shame. In affect theory, to turn away embodies shame. Further, the inter-play between shame and pride that Augustine presents, where pride seeks to assuage shame, mirrors the understanding of the relationship between shame and pride in affect theory and trauma literature.

However, when Augustine addresses pride, he is usually understood as meaning *hubris* and self-aggrandizement, defined as pathological in affect theory. The pathologized notion of pride rests at the core of Augustine's critique. Quoting from Ecclesiastes, he asserts that pride, as sin's root, constitutes "a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation" and a person's rejection of an immutable God to please him/herself.[77] In pride "man regards himself in his own light."[78] Turning from God towards the self to please the self represents the "evil" that happens for Augustine "in secret." The "other evil, which was committed in the open," results in the act of disobedience of God emblematized in the disconnection with God.[79] For Augustine, pride is a kind of *a priori* condition that enables the enticement by the serpent towards materiality. But pride also happens in secret. As Augustine does with shame, he also sets pride within the field of vision, and when asserting that it happens in secret, he connects pride to shame. In

[77] Ibid., 14.13: 571.

[78] Ibid., 573.

[79] Ibid.

Augustine's interpretation of the Edenic narrative then, things happen in secret because they evoke shame.

In Augustine, as in affect theory, secrecy and isolation perpetuate shame. In fact, in Augustine, from the first, secret sin or turning away from God in pride, shame emerges. Augustine writes, "It was in secret that the first human beings began to be evil."[80] In secret, their bodies are also implicated. Marjorie Suchocki recognizes Augustine's development of Adam's fall in *City of God* as both a secret sin and an open sin. She writes, "Its secrecy is the turning 'away from that light by which, had he followed it, he would himself have become light,' and the 'craving for undue exaltation' (XIV: 13). Its openness is the rank disobedience by which Adam falls 'away from the work of God to his own work.'"[81] Suchocki's interpretation of Adam turning from the light, as if hiding, evidences shame, the shame that truncates interest and severs attachment. Bodies diagnosed in shame turn away, blush, and hide from exposure. Such bodies seek, as Adam and Eve did, to perform in secret, but then also to, upon exposure, hide, avoiding re-attachment.

Augustine defines pride as a force manifested in the "arrogant angel," which aligns pride not only with nothing, but also with evil. Thus, the affective structure of pride includes its motivation by envy of and desire to be God. Pride serves as the affective impulse, or impetus, that motivates Adam and Eve to turn from God. Pride

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Marjorie Suchocki, "The Symbolic Structure of Augustine's 'Confessions,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50, no. 3 (September 1982): 367. Suchocki analyzes Augustine's development in *City of God* of Adam's fall as both a secret sin and an open sin.

falsely permits the belief that the self can exist and subsist in isolation without dependence on others, and for Augustine, this means dependence on God. As *hubris*, pride scoffs at the other as an object of attachment and attunement, seeking instead power adumbrated in self-reliance. In the *Confessions,* he admits to succumbing to pride himself and thus detaching from God. He directs his angst and own suffering towards Satan, blaming Satan's pride. This pride rejects subjection to God and provokes an individual to desire to be followed rather than to follow God.

This sinful state, a stigma for which one should be ashamed, precedes the next or subsequent sinful act of disobedience for which one experiences guilt. The shame Augustine says should be felt of pride precedes guilt and should not be confused with guilt. Guilt signifies a result of wrongdoing throughout the *City of God* linked to specific acts of sin, murder, criminal activity, and eating forbidden fruit. Guilt is thus compartmentalized and addressed rightly as a response to wrongdoing.[82] The evolution of shame, though, occurs sequentially. First, pride provokes an initial layer of shame, increasing the possibility of temptation and lust, provoking an additional layer of shame, not guilt. The prescription for this pride, for Augustine, is humility. Humility tempers the secondary evils of temptation and lust. Again, humility as the cure for pride is, in one sense, a final layer of generated shame.

[82] Further, in Book 13.4, Augustine frees humankind from the guilt of the first act of disobedience by showing that it is shame, not guilt, that is carried forward. Then, in Book 14, he mentions guilt only in relation to disobedience, an action provoked by what Augustine thinks is a much greater sin: pride. Augustine writes, "The pride of the transgressor was worse than the sin itself," 14.14: 574.

As the first sin, pride engenders a postlapsarian shame and provokes a disobedient act, which, in turn, engenders guilt. The resulting knowledge of nakedness and lack of control of bodily movement engenders additional shame. As a result of Adam and Eve's actions, individuals are bound to privilege the self over God to address shame. Augustine's cure: more shame, in the form of modesty embodied in covering-up. Thus, Augustine describes and prescribes a shame cycle recognized by theorists as shame felt for some behavior perceived as shameful, each of which eventually leads to gross withdrawal, or anger and rage as an amelioration of such shame.[83] In addition, shame as an outcome of the shame cycles serves as a "mediator of identity."[84] Although cycles of shame differ among individuals, cultures, and time, such shame modulates character.

In Augustine's shame cycle, pride contrasts with humility; pride, as evil should, according to Augustine, elicit shame, while it simultaneously humiliates or shames the self. Augustine asserts that pride as "exaltation abases" whereas "humility exalts."[85] Furthermore, pride brings humanity nearer to nothing. As unnatural or not of God, pride serves as a rejection of God and obedience, where obedience is "the mother and guardian of all the other virtues."[86] As such, pride is perverse and constitutes a turning away from the good in God.

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[83] See Scheff, "The Shame Rage Spiral;" Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame*, 128, 129, and 239. See also Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 64, where she calls this cycle a "chain reaction of shame dynamics."

[84] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 63.

[85] Augustine, *City of God,* 14.13: 572.

[86] Ibid., 14.12: 571.

## Hiding and Covering-Up

Once they have eaten from the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve hide because, Adam states, they are "naked and afraid." Their newly understood nakedness provokes fear and a desire to hide, a classic indicator of shame. Now when they see their bodies, they feel shame. However, the gesture of hiding fails to prevent the experience of shame or to hinder it; instead, hiding amplifies shame.[87]

Reactions to shame that include hiding can be compared to the behavior of withdrawal, a "learned defense against intense and enduring shame affect."[88] Like shame, withdrawal happens on a spectrum. Temporarily withdrawing allows for reparation and recovery from shame, but if acknowledging shame fails to occur, withdrawal permits it to be further aggrandized and ultimately interred. In fact, "unacknowledged shame creates a form of self-perpetuating entrapment in one's own isolation."[89] Whether through hiding or withdrawing, reducing shame requires that it come into view, just as amelioration requires attachment and attunement. Hidden shame grows, while shame exposed diminishes.

However, Augustine observes that hiding shame becomes the norm, aligning it with guilt and pride. For instance, for Augustine, after the Fall, sexual intercourse, which

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[87] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 454 and 480. Here Tomkins asserts that requiring shame to be hidden makes shame even worse. Conversely, allowing a child to feel shame within the field of exposure allows for shame to be reduced.

[88] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 321. Nathanson also asserts that an adaptive response to shame is to withdrawal to reflect on the shame experience in order to learn something from it, or in order to "not be overwhelmed" by an experience, see page 318.

[89] S. M. Retzinger, "A Theory of Mental Illness: Integrating Social and Emotional Aspects," *Psychiatry* 152, no. 3 (1989): 5.

provokes the internal "natural sense of shame," requires secret hiding places. The right action of sex as procreation has become sullied and though "it longs to become known, it blushes to be seen."[90] The feeling of shame that accompanies sexuality is, for Augustine, simply a "punishment."[91] His construction here illuminates what can be interpreted in Christianity as the interplay of the normal feeling of sexual impulses with the projected norms of the tradition: hide it and cover-up the shamed parts. This living in shame, illustrated by "covering-up," develops into the natural state of humanity after the Fall.

In summary, after having located shame in the body, Augustine asserts that shame is also on the body as the *pudenda*, or shamed parts. Covering-up the *pudenda*, or 'visible' shame, serves as the keystone to Augustine's explication of shame. The *pudenda* prove and ratify the internal stigma. Shame is a mark on and in the flesh; covering-up the flesh, and hiding are the first steps in a habituation process that serves to counteract the evil will which provokes pride and desire. Augustine intends that gestures of shame modulate pride and desire. So in alignment with the Edenic narrative in Genesis, he observes that Adam and Eve cover the *pudenda* with fig leaves – to conceal and contain shame, but also to protect their *pudenda* from eliciting further shame through sexual acts. The leaves prompt the final visual cue that Adam and Eve reject God and sever the prelapsarian attachment. The cover-up of the *pudenda*, thus, becomes a kind of sign and symbol of the whole turning away from God. Put another way, the cover-up signals the punishment that humanity has incurred by rejecting God, revealing the body and the newfound state of the

[90] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.18: 580.

[91] Ibid.

body in shame. But the cover-up also conceals something critical, achieving an aim that Augustine does not intend: it veils the self that seeks the primal attachment, interfering with the connection to God.

## Humility

Augustine juxtaposes humility and pride, but as discussed earlier, he addresses two types of pride: pride as self-exaltation, related to shame, and pride as esteem garnered from God. Self-worship constitutes the pride that humanity suffers which results in shame – as a punishment and because, for Augustine, this pride hides shame in the first place. Pride as esteem from God is better expressed as grace and desire rightly directed toward God. Augustine prescribes humility to alleviate the former sense of pride, urging Christians to turn back to God. But I want to show that in Augustine, another sense of humility persists, and it relates to the innate sense of shame that points to relationality. Therefore, I delineate between 1) pride as *hubris*, which affectively masks shame, along with the subsequent response of humility, and 2) a true humility that relates to self-worth and attachment, linking with the true, prelapsarian shame that bonds individuals one to the other, and to God.

In the first sense, humility is a state that Augustine suggests humanity assume in response to pride, but to his relief it also counter-acts the compulsive habit provoked by lust and manifesting in *pudenda*.[92] This humility has the potential to assuage both pride

[92] There are several places in *City of God* and *Confessions* where Augustine talks about habit. In his biography of Augustine, Peter Brown discusses the saint's interpretation of habit as a "compulsive force"

(the exaltation of the self over God) and lust (desire for something/someone other than God). Augustine asserts that the individual feels toxic shame as a result of pride, the secret sin, and should practice this humility, also conceived of as modesty, to prevent pride from further soliciting human attention.

Augustine suggests that the will and the self be turned towards God in acts of obedience, which "can belong only to the humble."[93] He details this turn towards God as the opposite of pride as *hubris*. In his view, humility exalts by subjecting the mind to God, and thus thwarting self-exaltation. For Augustine, then, submission to God is the only way to combat pride. Therefore, humility also opposes the Devil as the posture assumed in the city of God, where the love of God precedes love of self.[94]

Pattison, in his own analysis of Augustine on pride, addresses the maladaptivity of assuaging pride with a habit of humility without distinguishing the term. He writes, "There might seem to be little wrong with advocating the wickedness of pride and the rightness of humility. However, this is a classic case where theological ideas may produce secondary effects and interpretations in relation to shame that may not have been intended by their authors and perpetuators."[95] He continues, addressing one effect of the negative labeling of pride, that "it prevents any kind of nuanced, positive evaluation of

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derived from memory, especially the experience of pleasure so "inflicted" on memory; this pleasure is amplified, remembered, and repeated and thus becomes a compulsive habit; see Brown, *Augustine*, 149.

[93] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.13: 573.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology*, 249.

pride."[96] Instead, the Christian self is shaped to feel shame for feeling pride, which has a retriggering effect. Thus, the Christian tradition ushers the self into the cycle or spiral of shame.

In Augustine, humility that counteracts *hubris* includes modesty and obedience. Like Adam and Eve, humanity's response to anything that distracts from the relationship with God should be a gesture of submission that in effect turns the subject back to God. When Augustine denounces pride and prescribes this particular humility, he extols shame**.** This shame hovers close to its convergence in Greek literature with humility and modesty encompassed in the term *aidos,* which also conveys a sense of prospection and inhibition.[97] Augustine asserts that this kind of humility be assumed in response to the pride he describes as evil will. Humility, in this sense, engenders obedience and opposes the raucousness of pride as *hubris*. In terms of shame theory, modesty linked to shame and positioned dangerously close to humility engenders a sense of lowered self-worth and emerges in the gestures of shame.[98]

However, grace received from the turn to God also intertwines with humility for Augustine, but this sense of humility compels reattachment to God. This humility relates to innate shame, not pathologized by gestures that reinforce subservience, loss, and

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[96] Ibid.

[97] See David Konstan, "Shame in Ancient Greece," where Konstan discusses this extensively.

[98] Bourdieu discusses humility embodied and patterned as a female quality the gestures of which replicate shame and modesty, see *The Logic of Practice*, 72; and Tomkins cites Freud, as aligning modesty with the covering up of deficient female genitals, see *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, 566. These examples point to the social association of shame or something shameful with modesty and humility.

deficiency. Interpreting Augustine's humility in this way leads to what Pattison addresses as healthy humility; this is not the habituation of embodied shame imaged in covering the *pudenda* but is instead related to what Pattison calls "true humility."[99] This is the humility that Augustine presents as related to Christ, the manifestation of the humility of God, who combatted evil "in the form of a servant."[100] Godly humility derives from Christ's earthly manifestation in the form of an imperfect, mortal human body. In this case, humility becomes an acceptance of human flesh. Thus, there is a *good* shame, an orientation of life attached to others, embodied and embedded in humanity and becoming apparent *in Christ*.

While Augustine's extolling modesty and shame for shamed parts problematizes humility, his alignment of true humility with *good* shame acknowledges in the human condition a presence of shame that is positive. He corroborates this when he uses Christ as the model of humility when incarnated in the flesh, since humanity, not God, feels humility as linked to shame. This kind of shame is simply a condition of being human; a shame set before God and always visible to God. True humility turns humanity toward God so that the vulnerable, humble, modest, shamed human can connect to God just by turning toward God. Humility marks the path towards God made possible through God's grace. Moreover, in human life, grace liberates and controls nature, that which is good or of God. And God acts as a physician healer administering grace for the cure of human ills.

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[99] Stephen Pattison, *Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology,* 220 and 252.

[100] Augustine, *City of God*, 9:20: 366 and 10:20: 400.

Such ills are never completely eradicated on earth, according to Augustine, but grace, rather than any earthly component, makes pain more bearable and inhibits or contains the evil will. Through grace, the affective energy of the evil will surges towards God.

## The Body

As can be seen through Augustine's writing, the body represents not only the central trope that connects the city of God to the earthly city, but also constitutes materiality in paradise. Augustine does not dispute this.[101] Bodies are sexually intact in either realm, which further elucidates the blurring between the two worlds, and sexual proclivity persists in both. In opposition to early Church fathers, Augustine developed a sexual ethic that included sexual intercourse for reproduction in heaven.[102] If Adam and Eve had not sinned or detached from God, they would have continued to enjoy this state of supported reproduction without concupiscence for eternity. As evidence of Augustine's inconsistencies, Johannes Van Oort argues that a fundamental "absolute antithesis" or "unbridgeable gap" exists between the two cities despite how intermingled they are.[103] He sees the cities as two distinct entities. The "gap" that Van Oort perceives, I see filled with body.

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[101] Augustine's conversion to Christianity brought about an anti-Manichean stance that is illustrated in his linking the two worlds with bodies and in his rejection of the body as passive. Further, Augustine, in contrast to the Manicheans, believed that bodies were not a product of an evil power, which relegated reproduction to the power of Darkness.

[102] Elizabeth Clark, ed., *St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 32 and 72.

As Augustine envisions it, the primary difference between the body in paradise and the body on earth relates to the object of attachment. The concept of the body full of desire connects the two cities. However, in paradise, the body's desire surges toward God. Freed from fractious affectivity in the city of God, bodies do not succumb to desire for anything but God. Desire for God subsumes shame that is inspired by the uncontrolled movement of sexual parts.

According to Augustine, having fallen victim to the sins of the first parents, the unadulterated condition of prelapsarian bodies can only be recaptured in the resurrection.[104] These bodies are radical, in that through resurrection "bodies and souls will achieve control beyond control and submission beyond submission: as the difference between control and submission disappears, they will discover a freedom beyond freedom. They will perform acts of lust now deemed shameful with shameless abandon."[105] This City is also that to which humanity must reach. This reaching constitutes the sense of intermingling of the two cities. Body is the model, in Christ.

Body is the bridge between the two cities; body is the link, through Christ, between the human and the divine. In paradise, Augustine celebrates bodies and directs their affectivity towards God in both desire, what affect theorists call interest-excitement and joy. On earth, this shamed body is a body covered and the *pudenda* concealed. The affective experience that marks this cover-up is shame. Where does the shame go?

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[103] Johannes Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrines of the Two Cities* (New York: Brill, 1991), 115.

[104] Miles, "Sex and the City," 321.

[105] Burrus, *Saving Shame*, 133.

Augustine tells readers that it goes into the body, as a deeply rooted habit that is transmitted through generations through procreation.

Toxic shame, thus, marks the end of innocence, the loss of the prelapsarian body that engenders a sense of loss in all bodies. Shame evolves into a habitual, affective state, signified as a wound, a mark, a stigma, whose amelioration comes about by covering-up in modesty. Shame is the affect that Augustine uses to capture the way that humanity encounters the world. Interred in body as a stigma related to pride and concupiscence, shame is "deeply discrediting."[106] This attribute, inherent in Augustine's notion of the Christian self, is something that can induce aversion and transform into more shame, and even further shame, in a cyclical sense, for feeling shame.[107]

## Conclusion

Evil, sin, and, as a result, shame are not things to be removed from the Christian self for Augustine, but rather they require "healing and restoration of the original [self] which had been corrupted and debased."[108] Augustine envisions this healing as humanity's reaching toward God in life, achieving resurrection after death. His vision of a perfect being is resurrected in body, without sin, but theoretically still with shame as the binding agent to God. So although Augustine names shame rightly as an inherent aspect

[106] Goffman, *Stigma*, 3.

[107] Ibid., 4 and 108.

[108] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.11: 569.

of affective human life, his prescription of shame as *habitus* creates detrimental effects contributing to cycles of shame, misinterpretations of pride, and shame for and of bodies.

Augustine locates the uncontrollable affective shamed body at the center of his theological anthropology. When he envisions the city of God as paradise, he removes from the body its uncontrollable desire directed towards another person, while saving the affectivity that draws that person to God. In essence, he changes the object of desire but not desire itself. He tells the Christian, desire and do not desire, desire and direct that desire to God, yet he simultaneously acknowledges that in the earthly city that redirection is not entirely possible. His responds by asserting shame and a sense of shame. Shame covered-up by shame resolves Augustine's conundrum concerning uncontrollable human affect.

Augustine's resolution translates into a few key assertions. The first of these is that shame is a part of us. This claim is consistent with affect theory, which argues that shame is not only inherent in the self but also indicative of secure human attachment. In this view, the experience of shame occurs when a condition of love towards another is present. In such a way, shame before God indicates an attachment to God.[109] However, shame can go too far, when not named, or when interred in the Christian self. When Augustine reveals something 'contaminated' about the Christian self in shame, he effectively inters shame. Toxic, postlapsarian shame punishes the self in the form of a pulsing desire manifested by *pudenda*. The *pudenda* underscore shame interred in and

[109] Helen Merrell Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (New York: Harcourt, Brace &World, 1958), 27.

about body, carried through the Christian tradition; that is, that bodies need to be covered-up, and hidden from exposure.

Secondly, Augustine presages shame theorists who argue that guilt is related to an act of wrongdoing, while shame is an intrinsic sense of some wrong associated with the self. He associates guilt directly with enacted behaviors associated with free will, set free by God but threatened by evil will. The act of disobedience itself provokes guilt, but guilt can be easily assuaged with repentance, repaired and treated by grace. Conversely, shame as Augustine conceives of it is a shame that cannot be assuaged, eradicated, or easily repaired. However, for Augustine, shame functions as a primary motivator in the human desire for God's healing grace. Therefore, according to Augustine, a full relationship with God presupposes shame. Shame, as a corporeal affect, in its innate social function draws Christians closer to each other and God. Deeply interred shame buried by other affects and maladaptive behaviors must be disinterred for shame to emerge and so to allow for attachment. Affect theorists point out how shame is only possible in the presence of a positive affect, generally love or interest. As Nathanson writes, "We cannot feel shame when there is nothing to lose. It is to protect ourselves from the pain of love sought and love refused that we steel ourselves to withhold interest, to remain aloof and immune to the entreaties of the possibly loving but possibly shaming other."[110] In this sense then, shame illustrates love, and for Augustine that love is for God.

Augustine's theological anthropology that emerges out of the two cities is a treatise built on the idea of a shamed body. The body with its *pudenda* should assume a

[110] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 251.

shamed posture in order to reach out to God and avoid concupiscence and pride. Augustine is remarkable in his ability to name shame, to see shame, and to distinguish it from guilt. It is not guilt that lies for him at the center of the Christian self but rather shame. This is not all together bad news though because of attachment and affect. The prelapsarian shame, the innate shame of affect theorists that underlies human bonding, emerges in Augustine through the body of Christ. It is not shame or humility, as Augustine interprets it, but is rather proper attachment. It is and *is not* shame.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## MASKED SHAME

*Shame wounds and binds like sin wounds and binds.*[1]

Susan Nelson

*The insecurity of sin is always a double insecurity. It must seek to hide not only the original finiteness of perspective and relativity of value of which it is the purpose of sin to hide, but also the dishonesty by which it has sought to obscure these.*[2]

Reinhold Niebuhr

Niebuhr developed his theological anthropology over-against the "tender-minded" tendency of liberal theology.[3] He wanted to establish a hardline on moral progress, which

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[1] Susan Nelson, "For Shame, For Shame, The Shame of it All: Postures of Refusal and the Broken Heart," in *The Other Side of Sin: Woundedness from the Perspective of the Sinned-Against,* ed. Andrew Sung Park and Susan Nelson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 72.

[2] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man*, 256.

[3] Gary J. Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, realism, and Modernity 1900-1950* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 442. Considering Niebuhr's philosophy and rhetoric is especially important due the reengagement of his work and theological contributions by mainstream politics of the 21st century. This is evident in President Obama's crediting Niebuhr as contributing to his political philosophy and mission see R. Ward Holder and Peter B. Josephson, *The Irony of Barak Obama: Barak Obama, Reinhold Niebuhr and the Problem of Christian Statecraft* (Burlington: Ashgate: 2012), 4. It is widely acknowledged that Obama has mentioned in a number of interviews both how he himself has been shaped by Niebuhr's theology and the association of the Obama administration with Niebuhr's philosophy. See David Brooks, "Obama, Gospel, and Verse," *New York Times*, April 26, 2007, accessed August 15, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/26/opinion/26brooks.html?_r=0, and John Blake, "How Obama's Favorite Theologian Shaped His First Year in Office," CNN.com, last modified February 5, 2010, accessed August 15, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/02/05/Obama.theologian/. Most recently, scholarship in theology and political philosophy has recovered Niebuhr and his analysis of the Christian character to further a critique of American exceptionalism and nationalism. Informed by the context of war Niebuhr's political theology has credence today, see Kenneth Morris Hamilton, *The Doctrine of Humanity in the Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), where Hamilton traces the impact of Niebuhr's view of human nature. See also Catherine Keller, *God and Power* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), especially chapter two, "Preemption and Omnipotence: A Niebuhrian Prophecy," 17-34. See also political theorist Andrew Bacevich, "Illusions of Managing History: The Enduring Relevance of Reinhold Niebuhr," *Historically Speaking* 9, no. 3 (2008): 23-25, and *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2009). For a more theological perspective see Gary J.

he asserts begins with the individual. Within Christian life, Niebuhr claims that an individual's responsibility includes "understanding the reality of evil within himself, while escaping "the error of attributing that evil to any one but himself."[4] While a large part of Niebuhr's theological project sets forth an anthropology addressing the development of the Christian self, Niebuhr simultaneously rejects privileging individual experience and reason over the mythology presented in the Bible. He asserts that liberal Christianity neglects the "deep mythical meanings of Christian teaching" and the resources it provides, preferring rather a world filled with "cynical militarism and nihilism, on one hand, and a variety of naïve idealisms on the other hand."[5] His perception that the world situated at the dawning of World War II needed the guidance of the Christian story emerges in his delivery of the Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.

Pragmatic and utilitarian in his use of sources in this text, Niebuhr returns to the Edenic myth to illustrate his opposition to a utopian vision of humanity. He concludes that only a Christian theology with a concept of sin can offer redemption from pride and the desire for power. Niebuhr's development of a theological anthropology in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* establishes his role in the Christian tradition as a master diagnostician of the human condition.

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Dorrien, *The Obama Question: A Progressive Perspective* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), and introduction to *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of its Traditional Defense*, by Reinhold Niebuhr (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), ix – xxvi.

[4] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 17.

[5] Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology*, 466-7.

My project assumes that shame, as an inherent part of human life, can neither be dismissed nor changed. Only by being faced and disinterred can shame's maladaptive effects be mitigated. In this chapter, my purpose is to show that even though shame goes unaddressed in Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, something much like shame undulates throughout his theological anthropology. My interest in illuminating shame within Niebuhr's work entails a consideration and examination of the terms he uses to show how they either entangle with or mask shame. Thus, I raise key questions: What new understandings of Niebuhr's theological anthropology emerge once shame is shown to be present? How does Niebuhr's diagnosis of the self in pride relate to shame while pointing to amelioration of the human condition plagued by suffering?

Reading Niebuhr through an affective lens, and using psychoanalytic theory, I expose how shame arises, if somewhat obscured, within Niebuhr's analysis. Disentangling his rhetoric about sin, anxiety, and guilt reveals something like the dynamics and impact of shame operating within his theological anthropology. This unidentified shame within his writing emerges, paralleling the nature of shame outlined in affect theory and sharing its complexity in structure, its capacity to provoke pain, and its expression as a problem of attachment. By uncovering shame and showing that which masks shame in Niebuhr's language, I facilitate an identification of shame in his theological language. My point is to show how shame operates in his text to produce a *habitus* opposite from the one Niebuhr's theology intends to create. Niebuhr envisions a Christian self repentant and turned to God, but by misinterpreting shame, his work fosters

an image of a guilty self who represses shame; this repression leads to shame's maladaptive effects.[6]

In order to disinter shame in Niebuhr's thought, I begin by reviewing Niebuhr's reading of the Edenic narrative. Like Augustine, Niebuhr considers the Edenic drama indicative of the human situation in sin. Niebuhr's anthropological position is rooted in his interpretation of the Fall as a myth that founds human life. In his analysis of the Edenic drama, he uses key terms to define and delineate the human situation: original sin, anxiety, guilt, pride, and sensuality. Using Niebuhr's descriptions of these terms, I show how they intertwine with, relate to, and contribute to the production of shame. Niebuhr's slippage in languaging shame allows this affect to be interred both figuratively in his language and practically in the Christian self. Finally, I show how, despite Niebuhr's lack of articulation of shame, something akin to shame clearly emerges in his theological anthropology and is central to each self-identifying Christian.

## The Drama of the Fall as a Human Drama

In *Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr does not read the Eden scene quite as literally or systematically as Augustine does. Instead, he re-reads Augustine and resists prior historical interpretations of the drama of the Fall, understanding the narrative and

[6] There is conflicting opinion about repression and affect in Freud's work on the unconscious and in Lacan's on anxiety. The issue relates to whether an affect can actually ever be repressed. Generally, both Freud (at least in his later work, see *The Ego and The Id,* ed. James Strachey (W.W. Norton & Company 1960) and Lacan assert only the signifiers of affect are repressed; that is, the signs of the affect that appear in a physical form or that secure the affect are repressed. See Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Joan Riviere (Malden: Polity Press, 2014). However, as Johnston and Malabou point out in *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience*, 75-82, Freud is inconsistent with his assertions along these lines.

other biblical narratives purely as myths symbolic of the human condition.[7] For Niebuhr, the Edenic narrative symbolizes the founding drama of Christian life.

The central character in Niebuhr's interpretation of the Fall is the devil. Originally a fallen angel, the devil's evil "arises from his effort to transgress the bounds set for his life" by God.[8] As the original 'rebel' against God, the devil contrasts with and struggles against God, who is boundless and free. Full of pride and resentful of the limitations set upon him, the devil rejects God. And as a result of this transgression in pride against God, "sin posits itself" simultaneously within the devil and within humanity.[9] Consequentially, original sin, manifested in the devil's pride, becomes a "force of evil" and a source of temptation that will subsequently surge through Adam.[10] However, Niebuhr neither locates Adam as the actual source of the first sin nor does he believe, as Augustine does, that Adam and Eve initiate the passing of sin from person to person through insemination. Sin, for Niebuhr, is not inherited, because Adam functions figuratively. Adam is a "representative," who symbolizes the condition of humankind. Thus, Adam epitomizes or serves as a personification of a Christian person.

It follows that the devil becomes "force of evil," eliciting desire and making him more than a fallen angel since, in Niebuhr, he intertwines with the inevitability of sin in the Christian self. Each person, like Adam, is "enticed" to temptation by the devil and

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[7] Cooper, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology*, 13 and 43; Langdon Gilkey, *On Niebuhr: A Theological Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001),137.

[8] Ibid., 180.

[9] Ibid., 181.

[10] Ibid., 254.

"dragged" by desire, which "conceived" in the body "gives birth to" sin. As a result, a sinful body eventually suffers death. The imagery that Niebuhr uses shows that sin, while not congenital, grows and expands in the self. Sin enables desire, the devil's temptation, to entice an individual to further sin. The fall into sin occurs through a force that pulls and drags the Christian self away from God in a way that, like Adam, he or she cannot control.

Niebuhr addresses the sin of Adam stating that, "The sin of each individual is preceded by Adam's sin: but even this first sin of history is not the first sin."[11] Niebuhr wants to assert that the source of sin in Adam is not biological. It is a spiritual force, represented by the devil, "the principle or force of evil antecedent to any evil human action."[12] Niebuhr locates sin situationally, rejecting Augustine's notion that sin endures as an "inherited corruption."[13] For Niebuhr, original sin resides internal to Adam's being and creates the conditions for the sinful act, a manifestation of the temptation brought about by the devil. The sinful act thus emerges out of the sinful condition or the desire to be God.

Sinful action, then, reveals internal sin. Adam's refusal of God, made in a rejection of God's rule not to eat from the tree of knowledge, concretizes his imperfection, ensuring that sin is embedded in him. Niebuhr states that, "Adam was sinless before he acted and sinful in his first recorded action. This is a symbol for the

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[11] Ibid., 254.

[12] Ibid., 180. This is where Cooper also sees Niebuhr distinguishing himself from Freud, as not locating human destructiveness in biology, see Cooper, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology*, 44.

[13] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 263.

whole of human history."[14] According to Niebuhr's statement here, if Adam had not acted and if Adam had remained under God's control fully attached, surrendering his own will and urges to God, his sinfulness would not have come to light. Because of the devil, his nature includes this "bias toward sin."[15] Niebuhr writes further that "Adam is a representative, not of our freedom to choose either good or evil, but rather of our falling through unbelief [in God] and pride into a state of *sin* that renders us unable to choose the good we would choose."[16] Unable to choose between good and evil, the Christian self, caught between a pull from both the devil as a force of sin and God, can only achieve freedom by submitting his or her will to God. Paradoxically, disempowered will, or individual will turned over to God, is free.

Like Augustine, Niebuhr asserts that human will and human action are subject to unconscious affective forces that push the individual to be more self-concerned. Augustine expounds upon these forces as urges that rise from the *pudenda*, while Niebuhr locates these forces in the existence of sin, which blinds individuals, or disenables them from being fully conscious.[17] Both Niebuhr and Augustine describe a self that comes into consciousness, or into its full potential, only through attachment to God. In fact, Niebuhr calls himself an Augustinian when he locates will at the center of his discourse, over and

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[14] Ibid., 280.

[15] Ibid., 250.

[16] Gilkey, *On Niebuhr*, 136; and Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 261.

[17] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 181.

above reason, noting that the strength of will trumps the intellect.[18] According to Niebuhr, human will subjected to God's will connects humanity to God; independent human will disrupts the connection to God.

Having established Adam as a representative of the Christian individual and asserting that human will must be subjected to God, Niebuhr uses the Edenic narrative to connect Adam's internal sin both to the rejection of God and to pride, or the desire to be God. Niebuhr states that "the anxiety of unbelief" motivates this desire, or temptation.[19] Inspired by the devil, the anxiety of unbelief problematizes human capacity and signifies a key deficiency as original sin.[20] Thus, the predilection of sin is rooted in humanity's anxious, animal nature, connecting humanity to the devil, temptation, and unconsciousness, which results in humanity's wrong interpretation that its condition of finiteness is escapable. Instead of accepting the condition of the paradox, that life is situated between finiteness and freedom, humanity falsely grasps the idea that freedom will help with an escape from finiteness. The possibility of transmuting a "mutable good into infinity,"[21] as Niebuhr puts it, does not exist. What Niebuhr does posit, though without saying it directly, is that Adam fails to bear finiteness and vulnerability and succumbs to the anxiety that results from both. Such anxiety transmutes into temptation

[18] Gilkey, *On Niebuhr*, 91.

[19] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 252.

[20] Unbelief, as Gilkey puts it, is presupposed and transforms finitude into a problem see *On Niebuhr,* 103.

[21] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 253.

to sin, which is precisely where Adam discovers the inevitability of original sin – in his own freedom and detachment from God.

Along with anxiety, Niebuhr identifies guilt and remorse following sinful acts. Before God sees him, Adam is confused by the devil and commits an act of disobedience which Niebuhr also calls a deception of God. In Niebuhr's terms, the choice to disobey God stemmed from "a general state of confusion" or a lack of consciousness.[22] But an awaking to consciousness of sinfulness occurs, accompanied by a lack of understanding that God's grace can help in overcoming the confusion, which evokes "the despair of remorse," or guilt.[23] To explain guilt, Niebuhr quotes Genesis 3:7, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."[24] He asserts that this account "understands that guilt becomes involved in sensual passion after the Fall."[25] Niebuhr's interpretation of the Edenic narrative contrasts with Augustine's, who quotes Genesis 3 to indicate shame.

Niebuhr relates Adam and Eve's covering up of their newly perceived nakedness to "consciousness of sexuality," which he aligns directly with guilt. He implies that the proper affective response to body awareness is guilt.[26] Viewed this way, both the act of wrongdoing and the body –itself in nakedness and its sexual function – represent things

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[22] Ibid., 205.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 238.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

about which humanity experiences guilt. Niebuhr asserts that, "The self is afraid of being discovered in its nakedness behind these veils and of being recognized as the author of the veiling deceptions."[27] Furthermore, he claims that not only the act inspires guilt, but Adam's state of confusion, lack of consciousness, and inevitable sin also elicit guilt. The element of consciousness makes Adam responsible for inevitable sin and, thus, guilty.

Retaining Augustine's emphasis on sin as a consequence of freedom, where sin illustrates humanity's desire to embrace the will to be powerful, Niebuhr presents humanity as enacting the sin of pride. Pride persists as the actual sin and the manifestation of original sin as posited in Adam after the devil's refusal to submit to God. Furthermore, the sin of self-love, or pride, illustrated by the devil's descent into imperfection, is secondarily reflected in sensuality. Niebuhr writes that although the account of the Fall in Genesis "describes sin as primarily disobedience to God through the temptation of pride and not sensual passion, [the same account] understands that guilt becomes involved in sensual passion after the Fall, for man becomes suddenly conscious of his sexuality."[28] For Niebuhr, Adam represents the guilty sinner, who should feel guilty for what Niebuhr generalizes as acts of sin. Through Adam, Niebuhr recognizes the Fall as the moment that illustrates preconditioned sin, a situation in which all of humanity finds itself. Sin, always in existence, accounts for the human will that must be subjugated to God.[29]

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[27] Ibid., 207.

[28] Ibid., 238.

[29] Gilkey, *On Niebuhr,* 130-34.

Thus, for Niebuhr, the Christian self, replicating Adam's situation, exists within a series of paradoxes. The Christian self in sin is situated at the juncture of "imperfect" nature and "holy" or "pure" spirit, with the freedom to be both creative and tempted, while simultaneously restricted by finitude. Sin illustrates a misuse of freedom, or the spirit in pride. The situation of tension between freedom, humanity's possibilities, and finiteness, its limitations, emerges once evil resides in the devil in paradise. The existence of evil in the devil permits Adam's situation of finiteness and freedom to be "falsely interpreted" by Adam.[30] That is, Adam thinks that on his own, through his freedom, he can ascend from finiteness, while in truth, freedom can only be achieved through attachment to God. But this is impossible, and he is left in perpetual anxiety. To quell his anxiety, he commits the actual sins of pride and sensuality, but these attempts are made in vain. Adam suffers, existing as a guilty sinner.

## Diagnosis and Original Sin

Niebuhr takes up the drama of the Fall to beseech humanity to change behavior. Mired in the historical context of World War II, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* functions like a sermon associating the Edenic narrative with the battle between good and evil that Niebuhr sees manifested in pride and embodied by Hitler. In order to intensify the lessons of the drama of the Fall, Niebuhr sets forth certain conditions in which humanity finds itself: original sin, guilt, anxiety, pride and sensuality. These conditions

[30] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 180.

serve as the key components of Niebuhr's complex etiology for human suffering, and they undergird his theological anthropology.

## Original Sin

In *Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr locates original sin internally as a wound, an inevitable "corruption" illustrative of apathy, the "sloth of nature" born in humanity.[31] Original sin marks humanity's "bias towards evil."[32] This disposition towards evil postulates sin not as a problem to be addressed but rather as a dominating bias in human nature. Niebuhr uses the traditional religious symbols of the Fall to illustrate that evil is not only related to the "ignorance of the mind" and "the passions of the body," but it also connects to a principle force antecedent to any human action and embodied *a priori* within the devil. "Man's willful refusal to acknowledge the finite and determinate character of his existence" evidences the operation of evil in the self.[33] Thus, evil persists in the self because of a person's denying the contingency of imperfect, limited human life characterized by ambiguity.

Since human life predisposed to evil radically distinguishes itself from God, it struggles with imperfection, finite existence, and the impossibility of perfection. Moreover, sin is inevitable, though unnecessary, and this inevitability presents one part of the paradox Niebuhr puts forth in his theology. Sin is inevitable, but humanity is

[31] Ibid., 242 and 246.

[32] Ibid., 245. See also Cooper, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology,* 17, where he addresses the self as sin's source.

[33] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 174-177.

responsible for sin because it is not necessary. He believes that all individuals must attend to sin and combat the slothful characteristic of a path of sinful actions. Devotion to this end requires subjection to God. While never completely assuaged, sin can only be ameliorated by "subjection" of the "particular [individual] will" to God's will.[34] Thus life, while imperfect, can only be improved according to Niebuhr, when the individual surrenders his/her personal desires and sinful temptations to the will of God.

This subjection of the will to God's occurs only through what Niebuhr considers the spiritual practice of consciousness. For Niebuhr, consciousness distinguishes humanity from other forms of life. He articulates a world where consciousness helps humanity not only perceive original sin but also recognize it as a wounded condition necessitating remediation. Although the inner wound of sin situated in the Christian self cannot be changed, developing human consciousness moderates the extension of original sin into sinful actions. For Niebuhr, humanity, which is finite and limited by animal nature, has the capacity to change, grow, and modify this nature through individual spirit of which consciousness is a part. Niebuhr insists that consciousness, the spiritual aspect of humanity, links humanity to God and makes humanity capable of subjugation to God and securely attached. Consciousness is thus both complicit with original sin, since awareness for Niebuhr constitutes sin, and comprises the primary state of being that permits humanity to seek a remedy for sin.

[34] Ibid., 252.

## Anxiety

While sin's etiology is the fall into imperfection, its proof is an affective life of anxiety, a direct result of original sin, underlying all human experience and defining humanity's state of being. Indeed, for Niebuhr, ontological anxiety constitutes the human condition, which, along with insecurity comprises the "psychological facts"[35] that support original sin. While different from neurotic or pathological anxiety, which can both be considered abnormal states,[36] ontological anxiety represents the core and consistent state of being in which humanity finds itself.

For Niebuhr, anxiety emerges from two sources: Adam's awareness of being finite, limited, dependent, and imperfect and his inability to see the limits of his freedom. For instance, in the face of his dependency on God, Adam feels anxious. Yet this anxiety also perpetuates his desire to be like God. The presence of desire to be like God evidences the denial of the limitations of human life and experience.

For Niebuhr, awareness or consciousness of anxiety constitutes a spiritual sensitivity to the state of affective anxiety that develops as a result of Adam's knowing that he is caught perpetually between desire and denial. Ultimately engendered by humanity's awareness of the "caprices and perils" of the natural world, anxiety defines human life. And while consciousness contributes to anxiety because it includes an awareness of human nature's predisposition towards evil, it also enables a cognitive control that Niebuhr recommends. Cognitive control materializes in Adam's dual

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[35] Ibid., 251.

[36] Cooper, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology,* 27-28.

realization of his mortality and his dependence on God for amelioration. Any such reprieve from anxiety thus results from a connection with God.

While this reprieve from anxiety is never absolute, it can be tamed and at least affectively regulated. Though Niebuhr understands regulation as always in tension, he conveys in his work how anxiety proceeds as the condition of "man's relation to the temporal process on one hand and to eternity on the other,"[37] and unnaturally, so it should be controlled in so far as it contributes to the "boundless character of human desire."[38] Thus, Niebuhr situates anxiety at the fulcrum of a paradox. Anxiety emerges out of the union between the perception of individuals as at once creatures and *imago dei*, where the "vulnerable and insecure creatureliness" meets "the awareness of our temporality and mortality that spirit makes possible."[39] Anxiety entails an individual's rejection of God and endeavoring to transmute "finiteness to infiniteness, weakness into strength, dependence into independence."[40]

Anxiety serves as the precondition or the breeding ground for actual sin;[41] it is not sin. Original sin plus anxiety create the affective conditions from which actual sin "flows."[42] Clearly, for Niebuhr, anxiety is "bound together in human actions and the

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[37] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 253.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Gilkey, *On Niebuhr,* 104.

[40] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 251.

[41] Cooper relates this to Karen Horney's etiology of psychological afflictions, where anxiety itself is not destructive but is the breeding ground for neurosis, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology,* 64.

[42] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 250-251.

errors which are made in the search for perfection."[43] Thus, anxiety contributes to a cycle that leads the self to desire more and more of what he/she perceives as perfect. Anxiety "tempts the self to sin; the sin increases insecurity which it was intended to alleviate until some escape from the whole tension of life is sought."[44] This tension of life emerges as humanity's anxious situation caught between the finite world and infinity, a situation Niebuhr asserts that humanity attempts to deny. Importantly, denial emerges because "the ego does not feel secure," and the individual grasps for more power "to make itself secure."[45] This anxious grasping, for Niebuhr, can never result in anything but more anxiety, and power cannot heal the ontological condition of anxiety. Yet, humanity, according to Niebuhr believes otherwise, and anxiety, along with insecurity and the search for greater security, leads either to the actual sin of "egoistic" pride (self-deification) or to "egotistic" sensuality (the deification of another).[46]

## Actual Sins

Original sin emerges as actual sin when the individual Christian self "lacks the faith and trust to subject itself to God."[47] The primary actual sins that Niebuhr identifies are pride and sensuality precipitated by anxiety. Niebuhr succinctly details the manner of

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[43] Ibid., 185.

[44] Ibid., 235.

[45] Ibid., 189.

[46] Cooper, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Psychology,* 33.

[47] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 252.

emergence of actual sin: "Man falls into pride, when he seeks to raise his contingent existence to unconditioned significance; he falls into sensuality when he seeks to escape from his unlimited possibilities of freedom…"[48] Thus, in Niebuhr's perspective, to mitigate anxiety equates to investing in self aggrandizement, in order to defy mortality, or in avoidance, denying of freedom of choice.

The dimensions of sin demonstrated by pride and sensuality allow Niebuhr to account for the idea of sin's "expansion."[49] Significantly for human experience, both pride and sensuality are qualified by their scope. Pride represents excessiveness substantiated in humanity's unbounded desire, self-worship, and effort to defy the limitations of mortal life, while sensuality consists of escaping or losing the self in sensual love and idolization of another person or thing.[50] Actual sins, the further manifestation of original sin, decline into more sin as they inhibit and eventually destroy the possibility for growth. Therefore, they require continual conscious attention and either some form of repentance when the sin is against God, or remorse when the sin is against another.

[48] Ibid., 186.

[49] Ibid., 226.

[50] Ibid., 185 and 283.

*Pride*

Acts of pride, for Niebuhr, operate as the most basic and the basest of actual sins.[51] Pride emerges out of ontology: original sin and anxiety create a toxic mix that produces pride in each individual. Self-love, further aggrandized when love and desire are continually injected back into the self, crystalizes in the visual image of the puffed up self in pride. Niebuhr depicts this self as having a boundless ego, which he considers sinful.[52] The prideful self aims to "enhance the ego," to experience "a sense of power."[53]

Niebuhr addresses "the boundless and limitless tendencies of human desires."[54] The boundless ego commits sins that emerge in the "lust-for-power" and in pride itself related to "prestige and honour."[55] Rejecting finiteness, the boundless ego seeks infinity, the state of limitlessness and perfection before the Fall, a state that can only be assumed by God. Thus, full of pride, the self attempts to be God rather than to preserve attachment by submitting to God.

The attempt to be God illustrates humanity's attempt to eradicate anxiety. Pride's characterization as the profession of self-sufficiency, the denial of contingency, and the refusal to acknowledge insecurity culminate ultimately in a rejection of dependence on

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[51] Ibid., 186.

[52] According to Niebuhr, a serious problem related to the boundless ego occurs when this stance is adopted by nations, which aim to defy limits of finiteness and adopt a position of being Godlike. This is his evidence for the pride that hides weakness, which Niebuhr aligns with shame through his analysis of Hitler.

[53] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 234.

[54] Ibid., 253.

[55] Ibid., 211.

God. Pride before God composes the "religious dimension of sin."[56] Pride in the horizontal plane materializes as injustice, or sin against humanity.[57]

The slippery slope that leads to injustice begins for Niebuhr with pride. Setting oneself above all others, including God, the prideful self celebrates personal gain and power. The competition inherent in this position leads the self to express contempt toward others. Opposition toward the other illustrates "the reverse side of pride and its necessary concomitant in a world in which self-esteem is constantly challenged by the achievements of others."[58] Love of the self, as *hubris,* therefore also comprises hatred toward the other, detracting from the possibility of connection.

*Sensuality*

In Niebuhr's theology, where boundlessness reflects humanity's pride and signifies a fleeing away from God toward human power, sensuality signifies a fleeing from God toward the other (a thing or a person) in what Niebuhr calls an "escape,"[59] a retreat from consciousness, including a denial of the self and a desire to seek "escape from [this] unlimited freedom."[60] This self cannot bear the anxiety experienced when

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[56] Ibid., 223. This religious dimension is generally associated with moral pride. Niebuhr conceives of three different types of pride: pride of power, pride of knowledge, and pride of virtue. The third type, pride of virtue, grows into a spiritual pride that is aligned with a fourth type or moral pride. All types of pride are prompted for Niebuhr by a sense of insecurity and manifest in various modes of self-deification.

[57] Ibid., 188.

[58] Ibid., 211.

[59] Ibid., 186.

[60] Ibid., 147, 185-86, 235, and 237.

choosing between surrender to sin or surrendering to God's will. Self-denial results, provoking the "fall into sensuality,"[61] where self-love becomes invested in another, which Niebuhr equates to rejecting God. In this "escape" into the other, humanity's inability to tolerate finiteness and ambiguity manifests itself. Furthermore, as with pride, the act of escaping in sensuality is conducted through a variety of methods – addictive behaviors for Niebuhr – including, "sexual license, gluttony, extravagance, drunkenness and abandonment to various forms of physical desire."[62]

In addition to referencing sexual instincts, Niebuhr also notes that alcohol dependence evidences sensuality and claims that both behaviors serve as "anodyne[s]" or "escape[s] from the tensions of life."[63] Moreover, both alcohol and sex serve to repress the actuality of life as finite and the feelings of insecurity, inferiority, and anxiety that finite life evokes.[64] In addition, alcohol and sex expand the ego, muting insecurity.[65] Niebuhr writes that "Sex reveals sensuality to be first another and final form of self-love, secondly an effort to escape self-love by the deification of another and finally as an escape from the futilities of both forms of idolatry by a plunge into unconsciousness."[66] Niebuhr's dramatic language presents this plunge as an ultimate state of denial and

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[61] Ibid., 186.

[62] Ibid., 228.

[63] Ibid., 237.

[64] He uses the work of mid-century psychiatrist Karl A. Menninger to support his position, see *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 234-5.

[65] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 234-5.

[66] Ibid., 239.

repression that he wholeheartedly rejects. For Niebuhr, consciousness of finiteness, which provokes anxiety, connects humanity to freedom, while unconsciousness illustrates dis-ease, of which sensuality serves as an example.

Relatedly, the desire to remain unconscious emerges when sensuality becomes a tool to avoid anxiety. For Niebuhr, sensuality is precisely "a further sin, which is also a punishment for the more primary sin [of pride]."[67] For Niebuhr, sensuality can be generalized, as lust can be for Augustine. Significant for Niebuhr as well, is that society sanctions pride (the worse sin) but generally resists sensuality. To build his position, Niebuhr quotes Augustine from the *City of God* and *On Marriage and Concupiscence* where the latter states that the disobedience of Adam and Eve led to a "rebellion" of the flesh and "vicious desires."[68] Such vicious desires are both impure and ferocious; they evidence internal evil as anxiety, further described as "the internal description of the state of temptation" and sin. Like Augustine's *pudenda,* which he portrays as inspiring uncontrollable bodily urges, Niebuhr identifies the sex impulse, which he says has far exceeded its role as a procreative act. Brandishing it as disorderly and uncontainable, he writes that the sex impulse has frequently become an "instrument of compensation" for humanity's insecurity and fear of freedom, providing an "avenue of escape."[69] Whereas Augustine promotes a redirection of desire, Niebuhr promotes atonement of the inner sin

[67] Ibid., 238.

[68] Ibid., 231-233.

[69] Ibid., 236.

or deficiency that motivates such desire. Thus, Niebuhr characterizes the Christian life as consisting of a continual turning toward God, in what he labels as guilt and repentance.

## Guilt

In Niebuhr's analysis "guilt is the objective consequence of sin, the actual corruption of the plan of creation and providence in the historical world," for which, Niebuhr states, "the inner sinner must be held responsible."[70] Guilt necessitates the responsibility of the individual for his/her own imperfection since the self is situated ontologically in guilt, related to ontological anxiety. For Niebuhr, guilt both illustrates the existence of sin and serves as the appropriate reaction to original sin. It is the appropriate affective stance, which acts as a regulator of humanity's inner, if variable, layers of corruption.

Just as Niebuhr conceives of layers of sin – first original and then actual – he also perceives layers of guilt. The first layer consists of guilt for sloth related to original sin. From that sloth, actual sins emerge for which humanity should also feel guilty inspiring regret and a desire to act otherwise. He asserts, "The fact of responsibility is attested by the feeling of remorse or repentance which follows the [inevitable] sinful action."[71] Thus again, humanity exists amid the paradox of inevitability and responsibility.

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[70] Ibid., 222. Gilkey quotes the same selection in his discourse on sin and guilt where he asserts that sin refers to the vertical, religious relationship to God, for which humanity must repent, whereas guilt is the horizontal, social consequence of sin, see *On Niebuhr,* 113.

[71] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 255.

In Niebuhr's view, self-love fuels much of the suffering in human life, and subsequently, humanity should feel guilty. Reflected in Niebuhr's following account, this guilt serves as evidence for many societal ills that regularly befall humanity:

> It is the guilt of the sinner that his self-love results in the consequence of broken or unhappy homes, of children made unhappy by the tyranny of their parents, of peoples destroyed by wars which were prompted by the vanity of their rulers, of the poverty of the victims of greed and the unhappiness of the victims of jealousy and envy.[72]

Guilt, with its attendant remorse for self-love, is thus critical to humanity's release from such volatile situations. However, only an aware and reflective self can access guilt and therefore address it. This aware and conscious self both indicates the state of sin and participates in the healing of sin. But the assuaging or ameliorating attention to guilt occurs only when the individual seeks God. Viewed through an affective lens, detached from God and subsequently from others, the self exists in a fractured state of isolation, which perpetuates pride, unhappiness, and greed, all pathologies to Niebuhr. Underneath them though, lies the "sleeper" affect, ubiquitous but often neglected, shame.

## Shame Emerges

Throughout *Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr rarely mentions shame explicitly. However, viewing his work through the lens of affect theory reveals something like shame in Niebuhr's work enmeshed within and/or elided by other terms. This elision of shame in Niebuhr's writing is not dissimilar to the human experience of shame itself. As Serge Tisseron asserts, shame functions primarily in the body under the "masque" of

[72] Ibid., 222.

something else, including anxiety, withdrawal, general guilt (without the possibility of pardon), generalized rage, and violence.[73] The pain of shame, thus, seeks respite in some other affective formulation.

In Niebuhr, original sin, anxiety, pride, sensuality, and guilt all mask shame in some way. Drawing from the work of affect and shame theorists to disentangle these terms from each other permits me to delineate "marks of shame" in Niebuhr's writing, extricating shame from his rhetoric and revealing where it lies obscured. In addition, distinguishing shame from other affects clarifies its role as a central affect of human life that when repressed and interred has deleterious effects.

Significantly, the trajectory of original sin can be understood in terms of shame. The stigmatization of original sin and the associated degradation of self-worth, posited internally and establishing the individual as inferior, both relate to shame. While the inner defect of original sin elicits guilt for Niebuhr, this guilt looks more like shame when read with reference to affect theory. Further, Niebuhr asserts that pride and sensuality – the outgrowths of original sin – emerge as a result of the individual's failure to manage anxiety. Read through the lens of affect theory, pride and sensuality as Niebuhr defines them illuminate the way that humanity fails to manage shame.

[73] Serge Tisseron, "De La Honte Qui Tue Á La Honte Qui Sauve: De La Catastrophe Á L'Affiliation," in *Shame between Punishment and Penance*, ed. Bénédicte Sère and Jörg Wettlaufer (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013), 393-396; see also Michael Lewis, *Shame: The Exposed Self*, 119-127.

## Original Sin

Sin for Niebuhr can be described much as Tomkins describes shame, as "an inner torment, a sickness of the soul" that "strikes deepest into the heart" of humanity.[74] While Niebuhr's idea of sin as posited sounds much like Tomkins' shame, Niebuhr states that healing or ameliorating this wound, or evil in the self, requires guilt and a turn toward God. In contrast, according to literature on shame, the response to the sense of inner wrongfulness, or experience of the self as lacking, is not guilt, but shame. Whereas guilt results as a response to behavior, shame results in response to a perceived inadequacy in the self. Thus, guilt focuses outwardly; shame points inwardly. What Niebuhr prescribes as guilt, then, reflects a shame response. Guilt, thus, often affectively denotes shame in Niebuhr, and this shame aligns with the wound of evil in the self, just as it aligns with torment in Tomkins.

Niebuhr describes the Fall as one from perfection to imperfection. Original sin, resident in the individual as an inner defect, marks this descent.[75] Niebuhr's presentation of original sin as an interior corruption establishes a broken, depraved humanity in need of correction and repair. For such reparation, Niebuhr prescribes guilt, which functions affectively as shame. Affective shame surfaces in Niebuhr as the human person in shame (Niebuhr's guilty sinner) seeking ways to eradicate inner pain. Niebuhr calls the perpetrator of such pain guilt evident of humanity's inner depravity. Although amelioration of inner depravity can never be total, remorse and repentance helps

[74] Ibid., 387.

[75] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 159, 160, 268, 278, and 290.

humanity manage sin through connection to God. However, turn to God in guilt, which in this case affectively masks shame, inhibits the connection to God. Interpreted this way, God's assistance in the mitigation of the sinful acts of pride and sensuality, which flow from original sin, cannot be fully accessed.

For Niebuhr, original sin, whether individually "conscious or unconscious" marks the beginning of what he calls a "pathetic vicious circle" and "the consequence of blindness" figuratively speaking, to the wound of sin itself, evidenced in humanity's imperfection.[76] On a social level, internalizing this gross human imperfection as a stigma, supports shame's centralization in the stigmatized person. Individuals thus experience themselves as inferior, blemished, and sick. As Tomkins asserts, the belief in the inferior self makes counteracting a sense of shame difficult, leading to distress "which further activates shame, which thus ends in further defeat and strengthening the image of the self as inferior" or shamed.[77]

Niebuhr effectively grants respite when he suggests that for any amelioration one must turn towards God. Thus, in Niebuhr, to address what appears to be shame requires exposure and meeting God, constituting a contraindication of the shame response of hiding. Again, although counterintuitive, the repair of shame occurs when shame itself comes into view in the sight of another to be affectively attuned in relation. However, shame masked as other affects or experiences, such as guilt, inhibits repair.

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[76] Ibid., 250.

[77] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 330.

In shame literature, generally, shame occurs in response to an attachment, and shame often acts as an affect that connects the person who has experienced the shame to the person in front of whom the shame has been experienced. In Niebuhr's case, "guilt" for sin, or what I see as shame, becomes both obvious and assuaged before God. In this sense, shame and sin progress similarly. In her essay "For Shame, For Shame, The Shame of it All: Postures of Refusal and the Broken Heart," Susan Nelson writes that "Shame wounds and binds like sin wounds and binds."[78] Original sin and guilt, in Niebuhr's analysis, do exactly this, connecting and binding the Christian self, paradoxically to both the devil and to God. When these are viewed in terms of shame, shame then becomes the binding agent, wounding the self who seeks the healing connection that shame both needs and repels.

*Stigma and the Bad Self*

American twentieth century sociologist, Erving Goffman understands shame as a response to an internalized stigma. He describes shame arising like an affect "from the individual's perception of one of his own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess;" it is also a thing that a person imagines not possessing.[79] Goffman asserts that society marks someone with such a stigma as "not quite human."[80] Stigmas create labels and foster the delineation of social groups accordingly. This dynamic emerges, for example,

[78] Susan, "For Shame, For Shame," 72.

[79] Goffman, *Stigma*, 7.

[80] Ibid., 5.

in categorizations based on race, gender, sex, disability, mental illness, physical illnesses, or criminal status. Furthermore, socialization based on stigmatization contributes to a dilemma where the stigmatized has the pressure to decide either to embrace the group in which he/she 'belongs' or to let it go. Shame results from either decision. The stigmatized or labeled person experiences shame from the accepted or rejected group which leads to individual ashamedness either way, followed by feelings of further shame for feeling the first shame – thus illustrating the shame cycle highlighted in affect theory.[81]

The cycle ensues when the interment of whatever is defined as "bad" leads to a subsequent splitting of the self in an effort to repress what is perceived as the stigma; the intent is to quell anxiety and additional shame. In Goffman's terms, this manifests as the social notion of eradicating the social stigma; group alliances facilitate a synthesis that camouflages particular perceived traits labeled as stigmas. Importantly, for Goffman though, releasing such stigmas and considering them "bad-objects" equates psychologically to the eradication of the self and or the eradication of the self's association with a social group. However, relationships with "bad objects" produce anxiety, as both are intolerable and shameful. Thus, the individual in shame will often attempt to destroy that part of the self that is perceived as bad, sick, wrong, or wounded.[82] In the effort to dispel the bad object and the bad affect, the individual experiences a kind of self-annihilation. The perceived result manifests as a double edged-sword: either inter

[81] Goffman, *Stigma*, 108.

[82] William Ronald Dodds Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (1952; reprint, London: Routledge, 1986), 63.

shame and find some way to align the self with a group, or face the source of shame, the stigma, and risk social or perceived death.

The individual difficulty of overcoming what Ronald Fairbairn has referred to as the "devotion to repressed, bad objects" is that "because these objects are bad…[a person] is afraid of their release from the unconscious."[83] Fairbairn further argues that the subjects of repression are bad internalized objects, which may involve the repression of particular impulses and memories because they are concomitant with the bad object.[84] The alternative to destroying the bad object and suffering self-annihilation emerges as a confrontation with that object, often perceived as the bad self. That is, confronting the self in shame.

Viewed affectively, Niebuhr's concept of original sin as a stigma that incurs shame facilitates a component of repression, a splitting or cutting off parts of the self.[85] He sees repression or splitting as conducted by actual sins. When this happens, individuals see the good and bad as separate aspects of the self but fail to integrate them. For Niebuhr, this manifests metaphorically in the paradoxical connection of the Christian self to the devil and to God, relationships that always lie in perpetual tension. This tension leads to a shame that goes unnamed. Neglecting shame explicitly in writing (and in speaking) helps to prevent shame from entering consciousness, thus repressing it. But

[83] Ibid., 73.

[84] Ibid., 63.

[85] Ibid., 89-90.

neither a forgetting nor an excluding, the repression of shame contains an interior representation, depicted in Niebuhr's work as the defect of original sin.[86]

As a general process, repression serves as a human defense mechanism when negative affects become too overwhelming and cannot be sublimated or replaced with positive affects.[87] This kind of psychological process is particularly acute in cases of personal trauma where repression, including the repression of shame, strengthens because any situation that resounds too loudly with the original trauma or stimulus invokes further repression.[88] Repression, then, is precisely the interior mechanism that permits the stimulus of shame to work to obscure it. But repressed shame, contained and represented as something else, often has dire consequences: it emerges in physical symptoms, as other affects (in Niebuhr's lexicon, guilt and anxiety), or it is transmuted into some harm done to others.[89]

*The Slippage*

A closer review of Niebuhr's ideas alongside the insights of shame theorists further elucidates the problematic nature of shame. In Niebuhr, the Christian self feels

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[86] This description of repression derives from Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 197.

[87] General repression is a mechanism agreed upon by both psychoanalysis and affect theory, but see note 8 for conflicts of interpretation. See also Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 79, and Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey (1933; reprint, New York: WW Norton & Company, 1989), 19-23 and 114. Repression indicates a holding down of the unconscious and instinctual impulses.

[88] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 556.

[89] Lewis, *Shame: The Exposed Self*, 119-127.

anxious about original sin and, therefore, subjects the self to God. The remedy for the internal wound of original sin is repentance and submission. However, if human experience is described and understood in this way, the experience of shame continues to go unaddressed, both theoretically and practically. Niebuhr's understanding of guilt as a response to original sin has more to do with shame than with guilt. For instance, when he prescribes guilt for inferiority, he actually intimates shame, and when he suggests that Adam and Eve feel guilt at being seen by God, he refers rather to the phenomenological association of shame with sight. This is not to say that Adam and Eve do not experience guilt, but that the way that Niebuhr describes their behavior, and the subsequent internal effects their behavior, indicate shame. Shame rather than guilt emerges as the affective condition of humanity in response to original sin.

Shame theorists assert that the internal response to the idea of a deficient self is shame, not guilt. This assumption relies on distinguishing guilt as a response to *wrongdoing* from shame as a response to a perceived *wrong in the self*.[90] If this is indeed the case, then the response to original sin is not guilt as Niebuhr advocates but rather shame. When Niebuhr asserts that guilt functions as a necessary response to original sin, he supplants shame with the term "guilt," illustrating guilt's function as a marker of shame. Adam is guilty of wrongdoing, but subsequently and then concomitantly, Adam is also in shame. Niebuhr recognizes and identifies Adam's sin, but fails to identify and articulate his shame. Furthermore, the blemish that Adam carries signifies a wound that

[90] See Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt,* 18 - 25, where they trace the differences between guilt and shame according to what Helen Block Lewis first presented as the distinction in shame between the self and behavior.

cannot be healed, but for which, according to Niebuhr, Adam should feel guilt. However, instead of marking Adam in guilt, original sin marks Adam in shame, which requires covering-up. Accepting Niebuhr's prescription for the self in guilt furthers and allows for the repression of shame and its continued interment in the self.

Furthermore, while remorse psychologically heals guilt, remorse has little to no impact on shame.[91] Guilt and remorse presuppose a unified self, whereas in shame, the self becomes fragmented as a result of the ontological condition of belief that some part of the self is bad. By extension, ameliorating shame presents a far more complex challenge than the healing required for guilt, in part because shame goes unrecognized so often. Typically, Block Lewis has explained, individuals who feel shame substitute guilt for shame because guilt is a "less acute emotion" than shame.[92] Guilt is not as toxic to the body as shame; however, guilt left unaddressed turns into shame.[93] All of this indicates a much deeper problem than Niebuhr presents; reduced to a sense of worthlessness the person experiencing shame disintegrates and repressed shame morphs into additional shame or violence.

Although Niebuhr does not explicitly articulate or mention shame, the sensory mode in which he sets shame is that of its phenomenological and moral rendering as the fear of being seen. This idea of exposure centers the problem of shame and starts to shed

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[91] June Price Tangney, Jeff Stuewig, and Logaina Hafez, "Shame, Guilt and Remorse: Implications for Offender Populations," *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology* 22, no. 5 (2011), 710.

[92] Block Lewis, *The Role of Shame in Symptom Formation*, 23 and 121.

[93] James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, 110-114; Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 3, 5, and 163-5.

light on how shame can begin to be addressed. Niebuhr's major assertion in *Nature and Destiny of Man* is that sinful humanity lies in full view of an omniscient and omnipotent God: "all men and nations are sinful in the sight of God."[94] Thus, the nature of seeing and being seen lies at the foundation of Niebuhr's doctrine of God; he retains the visual metaphor throughout his work, and it has a direct, if unstated relation to shame.[95] According to Niebuhr, God can see guilt, alluding to the Genesis story where God's seeing that Adam and Eve ate from the tree provokes both the shame experience and the guilt experience. However, he supplants biblical shame with guilt, while eliding shame. In shame literature, shame, rather than guilt, connects phenomenologically to the idea of being exposed.

As in the biblical event of the Fall, physical or psychological personal exposure usually prompts the desire to cover or hide that which lies exposed. Etymologically, and traditionally, shame associates with such "covering," and as an affect, it surges through the body at the point of exposure, often eliciting a bodily response of blushing. To be sinful in the sight of God can easily be read as to be ashamed in the sight of God. Shame requires the internalized or externalized other to whom an individual seeks attachment. Presumably, the Christian self, embodied by Adam, seeks attachment to God. Exposed

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[94] James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, 110-114; Tangney and Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, 3, 5, and 163-5.

[95] Niebuhr dramatizes the notion of humanity as sinners under the enduring sight of God. For a more detailed analysis of sight and shame from a theological perspective see Elizabeth A. Clark, "1990 Presidential Address: Shame, Sex, and Rhetoric: En-Gendering Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, no. 2 (1991): 221-245. On page 235, Clark considers the early Church Fathers' writing to assert that the primary site where human community experiences shame is under the "All Seeing Eye of God."

before God after sinning, the connection to God and all that God represents in paradise is severed. This loss and the subsequent interior sin that diminishes self-worth elicit shame.

Niebuhr prescribes guilt for both the act of sin, or sinful action, as well as for the sin posited in the individual and experienced as shame. He blends the experiential condition of remorse for wrongdoing –for the sinful action with the ontological condition of something inherently wrong with the self, prescribing guilt for both. If guilt, as is predominantly assumed in the extant literature on shame, can be distinguished from shame based on action, then, Niebuhr misidentifies shame as guilt. Moreover, he embeds it into a tragic cycle of shame. On a broader level, part of this cycle includes the attempt to deny human experiential contingency through behaviors, which for Niebuhr are the sins of sensuality and pride. Interestingly, Niebuhr's images of escape and unboundedness pertaining to sensuality and pride reflect the behaviors of shame identified in shame literature.

**Affective Exclusion**

In the Edenic narrative, the desire to eradicate the unpleasantness of what Niebuhr calls "guilt" produces anxiety, the ontological condition of mankind. However, when this guilt is viewed as shame, the resulting anxiety can be articulated as the response to shame. Therefore, anxiety can be interpreted as pointing to or marking the existence of shame, which severs the secure attachment to God. Thus, in Niebuhr's theology, references to anxiety along with insecurity eclipse shame, as references to guilt do, but in

a different ways. As noted earlier, Niebuhr superimposes the term "guilt" for "shame," in effect masking shame with guilt. The affective life that Niebuhr postulates includes a cyclical relationship of what I see as shame and a resulting anxiety.

Shame from original sin then underlies a potentially debilitating anxiety and insecurity for which humanity feels further shame. Tisseron labels shame a "dreadful experience" spurred by anxiety in three phases: the anxiety of exclusion, the confusion that guards against anxiety, and the feeling of shame itself.[96] In Niebuhr, the anxiety of exclusion emerges in the distance between God and the self that Niebuhr perceives as resulting from original sin. Humanity's effort to deny contingency guards against anxiety, but in vain. The realization of insecurity in the world incurs, along with the anxiety of exclusion, further shame. What I am thus calling the cycle of shame and anxiety emerges when additional shame results from the anxiety of the first shame.

Furthermore, anxiety, related to other personal experiences of insecurity, helplessness, and self-doubt, contributes to the evolution of shame, even though shame is none of these.[97] The necessarily human experience of shame, however, exposes personal attachment, vulnerability, and dependence; all of which are normal experiences and affective responses that become pathologized if not appropriately addressed. Martha Nussbaum refers to shame as aligned with the "primitive" encapsulated in the idea of a "general neediness and vulnerability."[98] Her sense of primitive shame emerges from the

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[96] Tisseron, "De La Honte Qui Tue Á La Honte Qui Sauve," 404.

[97] Lynd, *On Shame*, 207; Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 36.

[98] Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity,* 183.

narcissistic defeat of the infant in Tomkins' work.[99] In this sense, Nussbaum sees shame as resting in human vulnerability. She writes that shame emerges when the "primitive longing for wholeness and the sense that one ought rightly to be whole" cannot be fulfilled.[100] Individual attempts to find wholeness constitute attempts to eradicate the affective experience of shame, which is often subsumed and obscured by references to anxiety.

When people are socialized to feel anxious for conditions about which they innately feel shame, the affects become toxic. Toxicity results when affects such as shame and anxiety converge with other negative affects. Furthermore, in the case of toxicity, the positive affects of interest and excitement, which encourage attachment and empathy necessarily present in the presence of shame, fail to assemble to transform shame; the strength of shame overpowers them, curtailing attachment and thus preventing any amelioration of shame. Instead, negative affects like anxiety promote shame's repression.

As a result, anxiety, especially anxiety as a mask for shame, is toxic.[101] Tomkins addresses this toxicity as follows:

> If shame is so mortifying, [as is anxiety] it is ill adapted to serve as a general broad negative affect. Despite its high toxicity, however, there appear to be a multiplicity of innate sources of shame, since there are innumerable ways in which excitement and enjoyment may be partially blocked and reduced and thereby activate shame. Man is not only an anxious and suffering animal, but he is above all a shy animal, easily caught between longing and despair. When one

[99] Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity,* 15.

[100] Ibid., 186.

[101] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 293.

> adds to the innate sources of shame those which are learned, the normal human being is very vulnerable to a generalized shame bind almost as toxic as anxiety neurosis.[102]

When such a level of anxiety becomes a perpetual state, symptoms occur. Affects that go unaddressed inevitably make their presence known through other means, taxing the body through physical symptoms and becoming more detrimental. In fact, both Block Lewis and Tomkins argue that overgeneralized, minimized anxiety central to the human self disguises and represses shame, interring it.[103] Tompkins labels the over usage of the word "anxiety" a kind of "socialization of distress,"[104] articulated as the state of being stressed, that generates repression and not the other way around.[105] In Niebuhr's theology, anxiety becomes a generalized condition that subsumes other affects, including shame, and thus, due to its neglect, shame is repressed.

## The Two Poles of Shame

In Niebuhr, from the aggregate of original sin and anxiety flow the actual sins of pride and sensuality. Both sins result in diverting attention from God by investing that attention either into the self or into another person or thing. Niebuhr expresses the human state in these sins as either puffed up, boundless, and expanded, or withdrawn and evasive, seeking a means for escape. While his descriptive imaging does not detail or

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[102] Ibid., 387.

[103] Ibid., 931 and Block Lewis, *The Role of Shame*, 23. See also related to this phenomenon Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 111.

[104] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness,* 347.

[105] Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, 111.

formulate shame, his articulations of pride and sensuality do mirror the dual behaviors of aggression and withdrawal that, according to shame theorists, are generated by shame. So, again, while Niebuhr does not involve shame explicitly in his analysis, his recognition of pride and sensuality can be read as indicative symptoms of shame, or as markers of where shame operates even though masked, enabling a more robust understanding of his theology.

Significantly, Niebuhr's diagnosis of original sin as resulting in pride and sensuality parallels Erving Goffman's diagnosis that shame leads to the stigmatized person becoming either too aggressive or too shamefaced.[106] Pride correlates with the idea of being too aggressive, while sensuality, in the sense of an escape, relates to a person's being too shamefaced. To expound upon this, Goffman quotes an unemployed German man during the Depression: "When I go out, I cast down my eyes because I feel myself wholly inferior. When I go along the street, it seems to me that I can't be compared with an average citizen, that everybody is pointing at me with his finger. Instinctively I avoid meeting anyone."[107] This posture mirrors the way that humans, according to Niebuhr, avoid contingency and turn away from God, which describe behaviors similar to those inherent in the shame affect. In both Niebuhr and Goffman, either the stigmatized person bears a posture of "false bravado," or he/she responds with

[106] Goffman, *Stigma*, 18.

[107] Ibid., 17.

"defensive cowering" and the impetus to hide.[108] Most often, the stigmatized vacillate rapidly between these two poles.

In addition, Goffman's "false bravado" and "defensive cowering" – which parallel Niebuhr's pride and sensuality – can be developed and understood further in terms of Nathanson's shame compass. Nathanson creates a range of behaviors in which shame operates. These behaviors constitute attempts of the person in shame to experience an affect perceived as less painful than shame. Patterns of defense include withdrawal (escape), avoidance (repression), attacking the self, and attacking the other.[109] "Each of these categories represents an entire system of affect management, a set of strategies by which an individual has learned to handle the shame affect. Such strategies are characterized by widely divergent assortments of values. And in each, the shame affect is experienced differently – the *purpose* of the strategy is to make it feel different."[110] Each defense serves as a means of reducing shame, or transmuting it into some other affective experience to greater or lesser degrees. In either case, within the "shame/pride axis," most individuals seek more pride and less shame.[111]

The "attack other" pole relates to Niebuhr's primary diagnosis of the human in pride. For Nathanson, this pole includes the violence inducing type of pride that disturbs Niebuhr, not the pride that constitutes a good sense of self-worth. Although Niebuhr does

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 250 and 318-319.

[110] Ibid., 312.

[111] Ibid., 20.

not analyze pride in any way that relates it to a positive experience, he does address pride as *hubris*, which affect theorists relate directly to shame.[112]

The primary aim of the "attack other" pole of Nathanson's compass is to replace shame through the acquisition of pride as *hubris*. Dangerously, the attempt to restore pride often erupts in violence towards others. James Gilligan sees such violence as the result of a deep desire to eradicate shame from the body and to reinstate pride; thus, violent behavior represents an urge to exchange the painful feeling of shame for a false pride. Gilligan writes that "the basic psychological motive, or cause, of violent behavior is the wish to ward off or eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation—a feeling that is painful and can even be intolerable and overwhelming—and to replace it with its opposite, the feeling of pride."[113] This type of pride can be described as *hubris,* not to be confused with pride related to self-worth. However, what his work with violent men has shown is that generally these mean actually strive for the affective opposite of shame, "self-esteem, self-respect, and self-love."[114] Yet violence fails to achieve this aim, and more shame results, eventually a very malignant absence of feeling takes its place. This absence of feeling, what Gilligan calls "cold," "numbness" and "deadness," results when shame has been compounded, repressed, and deeply interred into the body with no outlet.[115]

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[112] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 213; Lewis, *Shame*, 78. See also where Lynd distinguishes between pride as *hubris* and pride as honor or self-esteem, *On Shame,* 252.

[113] Gilligan, "*Shame, Guilt, and Violence*," 1153.

[114] Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, 47.

Violence in Nathanson's theory alternately emanates in the form of "attack self," an approach situated at the opposite pole of "attack other." More surreptitious and harder to identify than attacking another, "attack self" mode appears benign at first and often occurs within attachment relationships. For instance, a person in an abusive partnership continues to stay in the relationship and tolerate abuse as a result of shame. Essentially, forms of violence towards the self, which manifest pathologically rely on a sentiment that includes diminished self-worth; a person in this posture feels deserving of punishment and perpetuates that procurement through a variety of means.

Niebuhr's theological aim is to provide some guidance for humanity on how to stop the cycles of aggressiveness, withdrawal, and violence that lead to an unjust society, and which ultimately distance humanity from God. He seeks to show that the acquisition of pride through violence, through what he would call aggrandizement of the self at the expense of others, always fails. Only through attuned attachment and reciprocity can the repair of shame that underlies violence occur. Humanity "infected by pride" leads to evil behavior,[116] which is often met with humiliation and what I am labeling as additional shame. Niebuhr recognizes shame, even though he does not name shame, in his characterization of the puffed up or escaping self. Viewing his perception of humanity in original sin through an affective lens reveals that he understands shame, but it also affirms that shame is a more serious problem than even Niebuhr represents.

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[115] Ibid., 47-48.

[116] Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man,* 178.

Without an outlet, shame is a silent killer. Under the mask of anxiety and guilt, while also attached to the idea of a stigma, shame is too easily disregarded. Unnoticed but not absent, shame transmutes into self-deprecation that leads to withdrawal and further repression. Shame manifesting in "escape, in the language of withdrawal" is "swift and occasionally total," reducing the self to destitution.[117] Shame unaddressed eventually amounts to the loss of the self. Attempts to acquire pride as *hubris* illustrate the effort to combat low feelings of self-worth and to recover the lost self. But all too often, as Gilligan's work shows, this acquisition occurs violently, and attempts at violence to recover the self always fail.

## Paradoxical Shaping

In his argument against sensuality and pride, Niebuhr articulates the need for an affective stance of guilt. The way that he articulates guilt also parallels shame. Guilt is the recommended affective response for both the sin posited and the rejection of finiteness, leading from the fall into imperfection and subsequently to the perils of pride and sensuality. The only way to counter such a detrimental path is through Christ. And the way through Christ is repentance, which aligns with guilt but does not touch shame. Adam represents, therefore, the wounded but sinful man; he assumes the *habitus* of a guilty man, according to Niebuhr; however, this *habitus* includes deeply interred shame and all of the ramifications of that state of being. Niebuhr, thus, establishes the grounds

[117] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 313.

from which shame emerges, but he fails to name shame and to bring its consequences to light.

In Niebuhr, shame would be both the consequence of sin "the actual corruption of the plan of creation and providence in the historical world" and responsible for bad acting. When this is the case, Niebuhr echoes the assertions of shame and affect theorists: 1) that shame cannot be overcome, and 2) that shame motivates harmful action, to the self and to others. Shame though, plays a central part in human life, and even though it elicits pain and can be maladaptive, especially when related to trauma, shame is inherent in the self and in the body. Niebuhr goes awry when he fails to name shame and instead centralizes anxiety and guilt, thus permitting shame to go unnoticed and to be interred in the Christian self.

The paradoxical Christian self that Niebuhr perceives situated between finiteness and freedom in relationship to God can also be explored in terms of shame. In *On Niebuhr: A Theological Study,* Landon Gilkey details Niebuhr's conception of human nature as establishing interrelated paradoxes each of which taps into the notion of shame in affect theory.[118] The elements laid out in each paradox, fold in upon one another, and according to Gilkey, "form a unity."[119] To further elaborate, Gilkey first asserts that Niebuhr considers humans as animals; even though as a part of nature, humanity can be self-transcendent."[120] Niebuhr does in fact believe that humanity can ascend from the

[118] Gilkey, *On Niebuhr,* 80-82.

[119] Ibid., 81.

[120] Ibid.

animal/mortal state and affective life where shame plays a part, not as a result of the self, but as a result of binding the self in subjugation to God. According to affect theory, shame is inherently present in the self, but shame emerges affectively only in relationship to another person. Attachment represents the key component to experiencing shame. It does not occur, even in its maladaptive formations, unless interest or excitement is also present. The first mark of shame intertwined with the stigma of original sin can only be assuaged through attachment. In Niebuhr's analysis, the figure to which one would attach to ameliorate but never eradicate shame is God.

Gilkey also asserts a second paradox. Although Niebuhr believes that humans are essentially moral and seek to do good works, they are also immoral beings and commit sins. Niebuhr doubts that humans really have an ability to choose good on their own because of the internal evil of original sin. Therefore, the choice to do good works necessitates attachment to God. In addition, as noted earlier, Niebuhr does assert that guilt, another mark of shame, represents the proper response for the failure to choose the good insofar as repentance leads individuals back to God. However, by positing original sin in the self, and recommending guilt as the appropriate response, Niebuhr thus increases the likelihood of the very condition of humanity that he protests: a boundless ego that rejects God and desires power over the other – in other words, the self in shame.

In the third paradox, humans, as a result of evil, demand "significance" while they feel "obviously insignificant."[121] Guilty of evil, individuals can only become free of such evil through full submission to God. Niebuhr struggles with sensuality, in the form of

[121] Ibid.

addictive behaviors, escape, and withdrawal, and with pride, as expressed through competition and violence. As shown previously, such behaviors at root, indicate shame.

Hovering between insignificance and significance, the human lives both guilty and free. He or she is guilty of original sin and incapable of avoiding actual sin but free to choose and free insofar as humanity is created in God's image. Thus, the Christian self finds him/herself in another paradox. This final paradox emerges as the overarching guilt-ethic in the Christian tradition. Critiquing this ethic as misdiagnosing shame calls its usefulness into question. According to Nathanson, shame emerges as a major component in the discourse around rue and contrition inherent in traditional theology. He describes how shame and two other affects operate within the cycle of remorse and repentance adopted by the Christian tradition from the Edenic narrative: "*Shame* triggered by awareness (both of the nature of one's actions and the nature of the self who committed them); *fear* of punishment for what one has done; and *distress* produced by the constancy of one's shame."[122] At the heart of the guilt-ethic, as Nathanson elaborates, lies shame. In this interpretation, shame, not guilt, emerges as the initial and primary affect, but shame also bookends the entire Christian experience.

Too often though, as I have shown, shame is obscured and interred in narratives, in rhetoric, and in Christian selves. The resulting notion of the isolated sinner, the central character of the guilt-ethic, is a Christian in shame, and since shame represents a problem of attachment, this ethic fails. Instead of fostering secure attachment, it provokes shame and shame's interment.

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[122] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 327.

Shame without a place for expression, shame unnamed and interred, serves as the central focus and problem of Gilligan's analysis of historical violence. Gilligan faults the ideas of rue and contrition that underlie codes of shame and honor inherent in episodes of genocide, urban gangs, Mafia, and world civilizations, including the context of the United States, where violence is legitimated and goes in many ways unsanctioned. He faults systems that advocate punishment and violence as a means of control, including but not limited to the prison and criminal justice systems. He asserts that institutions within such systems attempt to assuage bad behaviors with guilt. He argues, like Nathanson does, that the guilt-ethic's binary, inherent in the Christian tradition, cannot solve the problem of violence. It cannot because it "does not dismantle the motivational structure that causes violence in the first place (namely, shame, and the shame-ethics that motivates it)."[123] Gilligan sees the perpetual guilt-ethic bind as sustaining the problem of violence because it directs violence toward the self, which perpetuates shame. Thus, the guilt that Niebuhr commends perpetuates the problems within human nature that his work attempts to mitigate. Instead of turning towards others to seek attunement, the shamed self falls deeper into a sense of isolation and affective humiliation, often resorting to violence to ease the pain.

## Conclusion

Niebuhr's conception of original sin, which evokes anxiety, parallels the interpretation in shame theory that a stigma evokes shame. Ontological anxiety, then,

[123] Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, 235.

parallels a conception of ontological shame, both of which logically stem from the idea of "imperfection." Ontological anxiety bound up with original sin can be expressed in terms of shame, inherent, unavoidable, and cause for human angst. To assuage this condition, Niebuhr posits that humanity commits the actual sins of pride and sensuality, behaviors that when viewed through the lens of affect theory both mask shame and signify shame's presence.

Shame theory asserts that attempts to assuage shame by hiding or restoring pride occur as regular phenomena, and shame appears in what Niebuhr calls the sin of hiding, the human response to exposure. Additionally, shame, in Niebuhr, manifests as pride in the form of violence, which attempts to eradicate the stigma of sin and anxiety. Last, embedded in Niebuhr's theology is a dialect of guilt. Guilt represents the affective response that he advocates to both the wound of original sin and the behaviors of escape and pride. Although Niebuhr fails to name shame directly, he provides theological anthropology with clear marks of shame.

In Niebuhr, the Christian self feels anxious about original sin and, therefore, should subject the self to God. Repentance and submission to God serve as remedies for the internal wound of original sin. However, if human experience is described and understood in this way, the experience of shame continues to go unaddressed, both theoretically and practically. If the Christian self is marked by shame, in order to keep this shame from becoming toxic and deleterious, compounded, repressed, and interred in the Christian self, shame must be named.

Reading Niebuhr through the affective lens that I have provided reveals shame, including how and when shame surfaces in his rhetoric. Shame emerges in Niebuhr's lexicon as alternative terms of "guilt" and "anxiety," just as it surfaces viscerally altered in the human self in physical symptoms, as other affects (in), or transmuted into some harm done to others. Attending to the marks of shame that surface as addiction, withdrawal, and hiding, as well as to the pride that emerges like *hubris,* which detracts from the human connection and, instead, distances the Christian self, begins to get at the problem of shame in Niebuhr. But the problem is bigger than it seems.

Niebuhr prescribes repentance and connection to God to ameliorate the human problem he identifies as guilt. His theological anthropology determines that suffering, including the affective experience of something like shame, while an unavoidable component of Christian life, does not happen in isolation. However, his impression of the self that seeks God in guilt, alone and in sin, delimits the possibility of the connection with God he professes humanity most needs, because shame lies buried in that self and masked by other affective experiences. Thus concealed, shame is bypassed which leads not to connection but to "humiliated fury" and "depressive ideation" that inhibit social bonding.[124]

According to affect theory, shame is inherently present in the self, but shame emerges affectively only in relationship to another. Attachment signals shame. A severed attachment incurs shame; the attachment bond must be repaired to ameliorate shame; however, paradoxically, shame also inhibits attachment, especially shame veiled by other

[124] Block Lewis, *Shame and the Narcissistic Personality*, 99 and 107.

terms or affects. Thus, what Niebuhr professes as a solution cannot be achieved because shame has gone unnamed and interred in self to interfere with bonding and attachment, to others and to God. To do what Niebuhr seeks so adamantly to do, to ameliorate and stop violence in the world, the shame that festers beneath it, motivating it, must be disinterred, recognized, and disempowered.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## TOUCHING SHAME: A PATHWAY TO DISINTERMENT

*Touching acts and reacts at the same time. Touching attracts and rejects. Touching propels and repels –impulsion and repulsion, rhythm of the outside and the inside, of ingestion and rejection, of the clean and of the unclean.*[1]

Jean-Luc Nancy

People crowd the church at an Ash Wednesday service, but their hushed voices leave audible less than an echo. Heavily incensed air fills the nave, and all stay attentive to the priest who speaks during the homily of the biblical truth of this day as an entrance into Lent and as an invitation into the most affecting and tragic aspects of Jesus's story. On Ash Wednesday, congregants walk symbolically into the desert with Jesus not only to join with him in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in preparation for death but also to prepare for renewal and conversion of the heart. The summons to enter into penitence and prayer is also an invitation to enter into mourning, to communally grieve what has been lost and what has been suffered. Blessing the ashes, the officiate reflects back to the previous year, but no "Alleluia" precedes his words; the absence of this praise as well as the missing "Gloria" frames the spirit of reflection, which precedes and accompanies the ritual of ash that participants receive upon their foreheads.

In this chapter, I explore the moment of touch, when flesh meets flesh in an affective encounter during the Christian practice of imposing ashes on the forehead on

[1] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Rühren, Berühren, Aufruhr: Stirring, Stirring up, Uprising," trans. Christine Irizarry, in *Touching and Being Touched: Kinesthesia and Empathy in Dance and Movement*, eds. Gabriele Brandstetter, Gerko Egert, and Sabine Zubarik (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 13.

Ash Wednesday.[2] My investigation focuses primarily on the Catholic tradition's application of this haptic practice; however, the ceremonies enacted during Ash Wednesday in Catholic services have been and continue to be adapted into the Protestant church.[3] Ash Wednesday provides a point of focus for this chapter not only because during the liturgy touch on the face occurs but also because as a day that marks the beginning of Jesus's isolation in the desert before he was crucified, Lent ushers the Christian into an affective trajectory of shame. I see this shame coming to the forefront in the affective encounter of touch during the imposition of ashes on the forehead. Despite the complexities inherent in disinterring shame through touch in Christian praxis, consideration of the interplay of shame reveals new meaning for the Christian's particular engagement with Christ.

Leaving text and turning to Christian praxis, it is important to revisit what I have uncovered about shame. First, shame is a visceral, biological affect. As an affect, shame informs individuals about the world and interrupts the affect interest-excitement, which is a condition of the shame experience. Shame immediately and rapidly, but partially, truncates this interest, leaving the self still attached but misattuned with the object of

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[2] The touch of ash as praxis takes on different forms. For example, in some countries outside of the United States, ashes are sprinkled onto the forehead instead of being imposed as a cross on the forehead. Generally, English speaking countries use the imposition of ashes with wet paste and a cross on the forehead; In Italy, and Spain, for instance, often officiates sprinkle dry ash on the forehead, see Father Edward McNamara, "Laypeople Distributing Ashes," *Zenit*, last modified February 5, 2008, accessed May 2014, http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/laypeople-distributing-ashes.

[3] Keith F. Pecklers, S.J., "The Liturgical Year and Popular Piety," in *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, eds. Peter C. Phan and Robert J. Brancatelli (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 92. Here Pecklers talks about the imposition of Ashes as a Roman Ritual, used by Lutheran and Anglican churches, but also having recently been more frequently adapted into Methodist and Presbyterian Ash Wednesday Services.

attachment. In this cut off state, the self experiences a crisis of shame, which internalized becomes toxic, leaving the self in havoc and dysregulated. The embodiment of this experience includes a bowed head, averted eyes, slumped shoulders, and the general urge to hide. Thus, shame occurs within what I have called a logic of exposure; the exposed self in shame desperately seeks cover.

The painful experience of shame, and its preverbal, biological condition, makes possible shame's interment in the body. Thus interred, shame communicates to the Christian self that he or she is unworthy, or unlovable. The uncomfortable reality of shame incurs further shame or leads to the trading of other seemingly less debilitating affective experiences including guilt, anxiety, and even rage for shame. As a result, shame becomes a powerful motivator for violence, and its all-consuming trajectory interferes with connection to objects of attachment. In order to ameliorate this situation, shame must be disinterred, freed in the self both to operate as an affect should and to return the self to its most primal state – in attachment and attunement with others. Understanding shame in this way, through the lens of affect, makes certain demands on Christian theology. For instance, applying the lens of affect and shame not only leads to a nuanced reading of Augustine and Niebuhr but also encourages a more dimensional of view Christian practices.

Emphasizing the theological significance of touch, this chapter explores the theological and affective understanding of shame's emergence on the face, built upon interpretations presented in previous chapters regarding shame as an affect with distinct physiological, psychological, and philosophical manifestations. Drawing especially from

Augustine, whose deep understanding of shame aids an exploration regarding how shame functions as part of the Christian self, the inquiry reveals how manifested shame becomes accepted, ameliorated, and less destructive or inhibiting. Investigating the Lenten practice of imposing ashes on the forehead uncovers particular ways in which shame, the face, touch, and the Christian narrative collide.

Physical touch possesses remarkable and daunting power in social relationships, in intimate situations, and in everyday experiences to provoke a somatic, affective, and neurobiological shift in the body that is significant for theological analysis. Shame can emerge within the context of this practice and instead of being interred, shame can be drawn out, or touched. The practice both recognizes the power to inter and operates to disinter. The question that emerges from this duality relates to how the practice of the imposition of ashes can achieve touching shame. And further, what implications does the connection of shame and touch have for theology?

Drawing from classical philosophy, Christian tradition, and affect theory supports the elucidation of the potential of touch to disinter shame by changing affect; drawing participants into the present moment without neglecting the past; naming, recognizing, and constituting being; and cultivating intimacy, relationships, and empathy. However, touch itself poses a threat in many cases where Christians have experienced trauma. Thus, keeping in mind the traumatic aspects of touch fosters sensitivity to sensual experiences that may actually be unwanted or unhelpful. With this in mind, through touch, I encounter the imposition of the ashes on the forehead during Ash Wednesday to

uncover how the practice and the accompanying Christian narrative either inter or disinter shame.

## Theological Touch

Beyond imposing the cross as a symbol, touch plays a varied and vital role in the relationship between God and the Christian self. As Teresa Swan Tuite illustrates in *Tactile Engagements in Christian Understanding*, touch emerges in biblical history as one way of "making explicit the ways in which bodies give sense to the theological landscape."[4] Swan Tuite points directly to how Christians are made known through touch, using as one example the disciple's recognition of Jesus through touch in the Gospel of John. She argues also that in Luther's teaching on baptism related to justification by faith, touch "provides a more adequate metaphor for justification imagining union in terms of God's abiding with the sinner and extending an ever open invitation to deeper relating."[5]

Swan Tuite challenges the tradition's focus on the visual and auditory, encouraging the tactile as a both a valuable and essential aspect of Christian praxis. She opens up a tactile landscape, which features in Christian practice and theology. Taking Swan Tuite's lead, discovering where touch emerges biblically and rhetorically in the Christian tradition, substantiates the theological significance of touch.

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[4] Teresa Swan Tuite, "Tactile Engagements in Christian Understanding," (PhD diss., Yale, 2008), 7.

[5] Ibid., abstract.

The power of touch is ratified throughout the Bible where it adopts a variety of functions. Biblical touch corroborates the duality of touch, which can serve as a means of connection or punishment, highlighting both the potential usefulness of touch and its inherent danger. For example, in some instances, as in Leviticus 5:3 and 6:18, touch constitutes a transmittal: touching something either unclean or sacred bequeaths the properties of that thing to the flesh it meets. Generally, God's touch substantiates and blesses existence. However, God's touch can also be punitive. In Job 19:21, the hand of God "touches" him and exacerbates his suffering. However, in Daniel 10, touch has a different effect. When Daniel has a vision in which a messenger from God touches him, he moves from a position of prostration to his hands and knees. The angel then touches his lips so he can speak and touches him once more to strengthen him. In these examples, touch has varied consequences, sometimes transmitting good or bad, sometimes inciting empowerment.

The New Testament emphasizes the healing aspects of touch and touch's role as a kind of tactile testimony. In Matthew 8, Jesus touches a leper, cleansing and healing him. In Matthew 9:25, Jesus takes the hand of a dying girl and revives her, while also touching the eyes of two blind men, enabling them to see (9:29). In the same chapter, a woman reaches out to touch Jesus' cloak to be healed from hemorrhages. Jesus senses the energy leaving him and turns to her, declaring that her faith healed her. Although Jesus does not credit this particular touch, he knows that he has been touched. In this case, touch causes an affective charge experienced by Jesus himself.

Augustine's idea of touch corroborates the variety of biblical interpretations of touch revealing some of his own perceptions of touch's complexity. In his *Confessions*, he uses touch to express the coming to fruition of an experience of devotion to God. Augustine addresses God, "You touched me, and I am set on fire to attain the peace which is yours."[6] Being so touched, he is therefore blessed with grace and capable of sharing in God's light. For Augustine, touch inaugurates cleansing through a confession of sins. Touch in this sense bears grace and heals. However, Augustine also perceives a tension in touch; that is, when he relates touch to prohibitions. In a moment of self-critique, he quotes 1 Corinthians 7:1: "It is not good for a man to touch a woman." Therefore, for Augustine, touch has not only the potential to connect him to God, enlivening his senses, but also, lamentably in his view, the power to confirm him of earthly life. Even so, when Augustine mentions touch, he primarily does so to convey passionate devotion to God; his primary aim, as I have shown, is attunement with God. Viewed through the lens of affect theory, being touched by God's grace constitutes secure attachment and regulated affect.

Writings and the experiences of the saints and mystics also signify passionate, intimate relating to God or the divine, where touch serves, either metaphorically or actually, as the affective pathway to deeper spiritual connection with God. For instance, in *The Journey of the Mind to God*, Saint Bonaventure experiences touch as a spiritual

[6] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), X.xxvii.38: 201.

sense, which comes to its greatest apex when the soul embraces Christ.[7] Perhaps the greatest collusion with the divine occurs in the stigmata, as in the case of St. Francis, where the human body bears the wounds of Christ. Through this mirroring of wounding, God enters the body by means of the flesh. The French mystic Marguerite Porete expresses a similar entrance of God into her own soul as being "touched by God."[8] This touch initiates her ascent through the seven stages of grace. These examples of touch reflect, as Swan Tuite writes, that "God is made known to us through touch" as a source of most intimate relating.[9] In such intimacy, God touches the whole self, including the self in shame.

Touch, as a source of passionate devotion, whether between individuals or between an individual and God, also constitutes the self as exposed but in relationship. The "flesh as being absolutely exposed while constituting being" illustrates for Chrétien a kind of "vulnerability in flesh from every side."[10] This vulnerability makes individuals radically present in the world but also in some sense passive and susceptible to shame. In the imposition of the cross on the forehead for instance, the Christian practitioner is a passive recipient of the blessing, vulnerable to the touch from the person imposing the cross. Receiving the cross requires a unique posture of relative surrender embodied by the

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[7] Saint Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. Philotheus Bohner, O.F.M. (1956; reprint, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990), 24

[8] Marguerite Porete, *Mirror of Simple Souls*, trans. Ellen L. Babinsky (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 80.

[9] Swan Tuite, *Tactile Engagements*, 9.

[10] Chrétien, *The Call and Response*, 105.

bowing of the head. Yet the touch brings affect to the fore and draws the practitioner into the present.

The symbolic gesture of the touch in the imposition of the cross on the forehead on Ash Wednesday figures in what Bryan P. Stone calls the "movement and logic" of practice.[11] Intimated in Dirk Lange's work, in the ideas of the iteration of a process and the pedagogy of the catechisms, rests the idea of liturgy as practice. To understand practice as forming the Christian self, as Stone and Lange do, is to understand liturgy as movement involving repetitive events, moments, and ruptures, in which touch plays a significant role. Furthermore, liturgical engagement at its best ushers the Christian self into a story that intends not only to remind humanity of its imperfections and vulnerabilities, but also to awaken the Christian to the promise through praxis of the possibility of renewal and restoration. This possibility of renewal emerges in the notion of existing in relation as part of a communal body; in ecclesial language, this translates into an understanding of the Church as the body of Christ. As community, and body, Christians in practice also share affective experiences, which include the experience of shame.

## Shame on the Face

> So far am I from blushing at the Cross, that in no secret place do I keep the Cross of Christ, but bear it on my forehead. Many sacraments we receive, one in one way another in another: some as ye know we receive with the mouth, some we

[11] Bryan P. Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 26.

> receive over the whole body. But because the forehead is the seat of the blush of shame, He who said, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me before men, of him will I be ashamed before My Father which is in heaven,' set, so to speak, that very ignominy which the Pagans mock at, in the seat of our shame. Thou hearest a man assail a shameless man and say, 'He hath no forehead.' What is, 'He hath no forehead?' He hath no shame. Let me not have a bare forehead, let the Cross of my Lord cover it.[12]

The recognition that shame emerges on the face, or that the dynamics of shame unfold on the face, appears theologically in this commentary by Augustine on Psalm 141. Here, Augustine names shame and esteems what it offers to the Christian self. He recognizes shame's ability to bind the self, simultaneously to God and to other Christians. Placing shame on the face, primarily on the forehead, he locates shame within the logic of exposure as something to be both respected and even, cherished, reflecting the true shame that emerges in *City of God*.

With the forehead as the corporeal location of shame, Augustine again focuses on the body. Shame resides both on the body and in the body, here on the face and affectively in terms of blushing. He pays attention to the biological blush, understanding this physiological tendency as both natural and indicative of relationality with God. Further, he prays that he will never have a "bare forehead." Thus, he beseeches God that his shame not go uncovered, but he indicates specifically that this shame be covered by "the Cross." In this way he embraces shame, but he turns his shame to God, requesting that the Lord's cross cover it. This request reflects Augustine's imploring in the *Confessions* that he be clothed with Christ.

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[12] St. Augustine of Hippo, *Exposition on the Book of Psalms: Psalms LXXIII-CL*, ed. Paul A. Böer, Sr. (1886; reprint, Dublin: Veritatis Splendor Publications 2012), 562 -3.

Augustine does not petition then for shame's eradication; metaphorically, that would mean having no forehead, or being shameless. Instead, he exposes his shame to God in an entreaty for healing. Just as he does in *City of God*, Augustine asserts an intrinsic shame. Yet, the imposition of the cross can be interpreted in multiple ways. First, by turning to God and bearing his shame, Augustine models an acceptance of shame. He is not afraid for God to see his shame. However, next, he covers shame with the cross. This covering can be read as Augustine's own interment of shame, or paradoxically, it can also be read as Augustine's avowal that shame constitutes part of the self and by extension, exists in the Christian community, where the cross binds that community. By covering the forehead as the seat of shame symbolically with the cross, Augustine conjoins his shame with Christ, as if his shame is not only covered in the sense of being veiled, but also somehow blessed. For Augustine, this cross envelops shame and even protects it.

In affect theory, Tomkins discusses how shame emerges on the face. The eyes, along with the skin of the face, function as receptor sites for the affect system. "The face," Tomkins writes, "is the center of sensory intake through the eyes and ears, of emission of messages through the voice, and of both transmission and reception through the muscles and receptors."[13] Therefore, intake of sensory information happens through the eyes and ears, and the facial muscles display the consequent affect. Tomkins concludes that facial interaction represents the most intimate sharing of affects. When the

[13] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 123.

face is central to the processing of information and in communicating affect, what then is the impact of touch on the face?

Among socially acceptable forms of touch, facial touching comprises the most intimate type of touch.[14] The intensely personal nature of touching someone's face, however, also makes this kind of touch potentially volatile. A soft stroke or caress across the cheek is among the most inappropriate and most harassing tactile gesture in work situations, perceived even more inappropriate than putting an arm around someone's waist.[15] This type of touch conveys power relations and control, emerging as "particularly dominant when it is initiated rather than returned."[16] Issues of both intimacy and dominance, whether perceptible and/or actual in tactile encounters, make touch, especially of the face, significant and worthy of attention in theological analysis.

Central to modes of human communication, the face exposes the vestiges of every affect including shame. Hiding the face, turning away, and averting the eyes all function as dominant corporeal attempts to evade the pain of shame. In earlier chapters, I show through Darwin's and Tomkins' work that the face serves as the primary locus of shame. Tomkins supports this in his assertion that the "the self lives in the face" and in his notion that shame hovers close to the experience of that self.[17]

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[14] Judee K. Burgoon, "Relational Message Interpretations of Touch, Conversational Distance, and Posture," *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 15, no. 4 (1991), 246-7.

[15] Josephine W. Lee and Laura K. Guerrero, "Types of Touch in Cross-Sex Relationships Between Coworkers: Perceptions of Relational and Emotional Messages, Inappropriateness, and Sexual Harassment," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 29, no. 3 (2001): 210.

[16] Ibid., 201.

Thus, the face represents both the location of shame, as in Augustine's description, and the place where meeting shame first occurs. Eye to eye contact is quickly reduced as a result of shame if upon looking at another, one perceives in the other's countenance a look of disgust. Alternatively, recognizing another with an expression of respect affirms self-worth and counteracts the shame affect with interest-excitement, without ever quite obliterating shame. Both experiencing shame and ameliorating shame's detrimental effects take place in relation, in front of a real or imagined other, with the face exposed. Thus, reciprocity between people can be articulated in terms of shame and exposure at the locus of the face.

## The Force of Touch

### Attachment

Touch is a critical part of human life. Without it, infants die. Even the slightest touch alters biology. Indeed, even before a fetus has eyes and ears it will respond to touch.[18] In Ashley Montagu's *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin,* she calls skin a "first medium of communication."[19] Significantly, neglecting or not touching a child is understood as precipitating the greatest shame and having the greatest negative impact on brain development.[20] In preverbal children, repairing interpersonal bridges

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[17] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 359.

[18] Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 3.

[19] Ibid., 4

which connect the child to the caregiver requires touching and holding.[21] Without such touch, the child cannot and does not learn what it means to ameliorate a situation with regards to others, or even to regulate his/her own affective experiences.

The lack of physical contact as in cases of gross neglect in childhood leads to failure to thrive: abnormal or thwarted growth and development result from a lack of touch. Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz equate this state of the underdeveloped child suffering neglect to the runt of a litter in mammalian species.[22] In their telling chapter entitled "Skin Hunger," they detail the lives of neglected children "starving for touch."[23] For children in this predicament, the need for touch to stimulate brain development goes unmet resulting in vacuous affect and deep levels of shame. This perpetual state of neglect indicates to a child that he or she has little to no self-worth, leading throughout adulthood to infant-like behavior, extreme isolation, little to no eye contact with others, and/or violence.[24]

Touch, required for a thriving child, is critical to human development. The tactile necessity of flesh relates both to affectivity and to the field of exposure, where touch serves as an amplification of being seen. To see is to become aware, and when someone feels seen, a mutual recognition of regard opens up. In this way, touch takes on the

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[20] Perry and Szalavitz, *The Boy Who was Raised like a Dog,* 64-66.

[21] Kaufman, *The Face of Shame*, 36.

[22] Perry and Szalavitz, *The Boy Who was Raised like a Dog*, 92.

[23] Ibid., 92.

[24] Ibid., 96 and 138.

radical notion of substantiating existence. When it serves to substantiate existence of a vulnerable body, touch performs a function similar to conscious comprehension conducted through sight. Thus, to touch is, in some way, to perceive, while to be touched is to be perceived. This runs against a common conception of touch, illustrating a yield of affect theory, where touching represents a source of knowledge.

Being seen by another, being recognized as fully human has the potential to counter toxic shame. Where shame is related to exposure, to the "I see you" in the observation of the self by the other, touch intensifies the visual as it eradicates distance upon which the visual field relies. Further, in shame one may escape or withdraw; touch necessarily refuses corporeal retreat. Withdrawal in shame, which entails hiding, becomes more difficult, because one is already grasped, obliterating distance between the self and the observing other.

In the eradication of distance between two people during touch, interest-excitement is present. Shame requires interest in some object or something for its emergence. Thus, under the surface of interest lies affective shame. However, if interest-excitement continues unabated, shame remains regulated. To touch in interest, then, is obliquely to touch shame, confronting the possibility of shame's emergence. Touch and shame intertwine when touch establishes a connection. Thus, in both touch and shame, attachment becomes central.

As an affective "shaper of modern life," shame influences the social environment and interpersonal bonds indicating the greatest fear – of failure, for instance – and also

the greatest attachment.[25] As shown, interest-excitement is a precondition of the shame response. Thus shame, in its action of truncating interest-excitement effectively serves to indicate affective bonds.

Yet the experience of shame emerges as a result of severed attachment, and the self perceives itself alone. Touch has the potential to contradict this experience of aloneness in shame. Shame above all, Probyn asserts, "illuminates our intense attachment to the world, our desire to be connected to others, and the knowledge that, as merely human, we will sometimes fail in our attempts to maintain those connections."[26] The dynamic of and need for touch shares these qualities of shame.

However, when shame becomes interred, repressed, or maladaptive, it inspires behaviors of withdrawal and hiding that exacerbate distance, eradicating the possibility for connection or touch. Hiding comes in many forms; the body hides from others through literal isolation or by dissociating all or parts of the self, thereby curtailing affect and full participation in any particular event. Thus, the person in shame may be physically present in the flesh, but dissociated or not fully present consciously. Dangerously, in cases of dissociation, the affective impact of touch has the potential to further bury shame, instead of making possible its release.

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[25] Nathanson, *Shame and Pride,* 147-153.

[26] Probyn, *Blush*, 14.

## Trauma

Inherent in touch lurks the possibility of danger or risk highlighted in the case of trauma. The intimacy of touch allows for flesh to exceed boundaries and threatens its becoming unwanted, abusive touch. In such cases, touch itself maintains its feature of altering affect, but positive affect stimulated by the touch transmutes to terror. In order for touch, and for the events in Christian praxis that incorporate touch, to participate in the disinterment of shame, especially shame resulting from bad touch, the shame of trauma has to be negotiated, realized, and acknowledged. Shame must be brought up from the depths of the body and negotiated in terms of trauma, in a regulated environment.

Contemplating the potential of touch for theology demands taking trauma into account. The touch that incurs shame often manifests as some sort of violence, often in the form of physical or sexual abuse. In *Torment me, but Don't Abandon Me*, Léon Wurmser demonstrates abusive touch as a double bind. Wurmser discusses a child's inherent and natural longing for the caregiver's nurturing touch. A lack of touch leads a child to imagine that something is inherently wrong with him or her; thus, the child feels shame. According to Wurmser, in order to combat the pain of not being touched, which typically manifests in the anxiety of being abandoned, a core fantasy develops that relates to Perry and Szalavitz's idea of "skin hunger." Afraid of loss indicative of a lack of physical contact, the child wishes for any type of touch, including abusive touch. This dynamic emerges in the lamentation, "Torment me but don't abandon me; punish me and

forgive me then, but never leave me again."[27] This quotation elucidates the idea that the pain of punishment, or the painful touch, becomes "the avenue of union," where union signifies the natural inclination to connect to others.[28] However, union to the source of pain generates shame. Kaufman articulates this phenomenon as the ambivalent longing in shame to reconnect with the person that harmed us, evidenced, for instance, in victims of child abuse who find themselves in abusive relationships in adulthood.[29] The longing for attachment communicated by touch, and the ultimate quest for the good and nurturing touch, take precedence in such cases when individuals tolerate abusive touch, leading to shame. Thus, to be without touch, or to long for touch even if it is abusive, both facilitates and incurs shame.

Another problem inherent in touch, as it relates to shame, has to do with the blurring of boundaries between who touches and who is touched. The person applying touch possesses power over the other's body even insofar as the applied touch elicits an immediate affective response stimulating the body. As Eve Sedgwick writes, "the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold."[30] Thus, touch indicates a person's vulnerability, in that touch recognizes the other.

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[27] Wurmser, *Torment Me but don't Abandon Me*, 137.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Kaufman, *The Face of Shame,* 19.

[30] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 14.

Touch also functions as a tool, conveying dominance and exacerbating the shame of the subordinated. Judith Herman supports this, calling PTSD a "shame disorder."[31] Here, she details the most shame inducing forms of torture involving the body and touch used to ensure obedience: control of bodily functions, isolation, degradation, and enforced participation in atrocities.[32] Another, more ubiquitous example of touch that supports both the dynamic of dominance and submission, as well as serving as a kind of public shaming, is New York's controversial stop and frisk program, also known as the Terry stop. The dominating force of touch emerges in a routine procedure where one party is rendered publically powerless, and touching assumes the key to power in the exchange. Suspects are stopped, and outer garments are searched. While the law states that an officer "may search such a person," the qualification or form of touch employed remains undefined itself.[33] Shame emerges at this moment when the person touched becomes inferior. Subordinated and disempowered, this person is shamed into silenced.

The flight/fight/freeze response to a traumatic event of touch, and part of the impulse in shame to hide from view, renders the person as object of the touch speechless. This physiological response to extreme stress takes place in the sympathetic nervous system communicating to the body a need to escape, feign death, or exert violence. Affectively, these urges can be articulated as a shame response in the form of withdrawal,

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[31] Judith L. Herman, "PTSD as a Shame Disorder," Webinar, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, October, 13, 2014.

[32] Ibid.

[33] "N.Y. CPL 140.50," FindLaw, accessed January 16, 2014, http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/nycode/CPL/TWO/H/140/140.50

avoidance, or attack. According to Babette Rothschild, shame constitutes the affect that renders individuals speechless in the fight/fight/freeze response, but shame also disables the ability to either refute or respond to touch. In the case of abusive or intrusive touch, the trauma survivor interprets the experience of freezing, or "going dead," as a failure to act; the experience of shame accompanies this perception of failure. This situation emerges in cases of rape, torture, and physical/sexual violence and abuse, where survivors fault themselves for somehow causing the attack and for being unable to respond to attackers in any form of defense.[34]

Thus, in trauma, the proximity and sense of closeness that eases shame becomes inaccessible because that very thing constitutes a threat. A trauma survivor that has experienced the boundary crossing of touch in a damaging way cannot access the good notion of touch, which becomes inaccessible because of fear or due to feelings of unworthiness. Paradoxically, the "good" touch communicates love and can potentially provide healing from the "bad" and shaming touch. This brings to bear the reality of healing touch. The intimacy of touch signifies attachment, giving touch the unique potential both to incur and dispel shame precisely because it can restore the interest that shame initially truncated.

What is at stake in touch and corporeal practices, here in Christian praxis, rests within the interpretations of touch as good, bad, or confusing. Touch, so often intertwined with somatic issues around trauma that simultaneously link to shame, is fragile and subjective. It blurs the boundaries between participants, conferring the power to elicit

[34] Rothschild, *The Body Remembers*, 11.

affective response from the person who is being touched. It amplifies the notion of exposure inherent in the shame event, obliterating the distance between the self and the observing other. It implies a closeness that has the potential to elicit shame. In situations where touch has been a factor of the trauma, for instance, in rape, torture, violent attacks, and child abuse, touch violates bodies leaving them hyper- or hypo- aroused, ultimately dysregulated. In addition, the motive of touch questioned or misunderstood leads to self-questioning, doubt, and self-blame, which translates into an affective experience of shame.

Compounding this issue, motives to touch can have a variety in interpretations, and sometimes intention is not met with the spirit in which a touch was given. For instance, someone comes up behind another person to offer affection, a hug or a pat on the back, and the affective response to the gesture emerges based on the receiver's prior experience with touch. She might jump at being approached from behind, laugh at being surprised, or simply receive the touch that is given. Alternatively, the receiver might interpret a gesture meant to be warmhearted as offensive, or alternately perceive an offensive gesture as innocuous depending on personal history; for instance, many victims of childhood sexual abuse often cannot distinguish qualities of touch because their experience with touch has been so polluted by past trauma.[35]

[35] See Karen A. Olio and William F. Cornell, "Therapeutic Relationship As the Foundation for Treatment with Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 30, no. 3 (1993): 512-523.

In her book *Trauma and Grace*, Serene Jones refers to a woman Leah who during the Eucharistic prayer experiences a traumatic flashback and leaves the nave.[36] Jones finds her in the bathroom washing her face, overwhelmed by what is going on in the liturgy. Jones continues to describe Leah's dissociated and shamed response to Jones' questioning care. Her panic and dissociation is the effect of trauma. Leah's reaction, while not particularly to touch, reveals the risk of touch in practice, and again, paradoxically illustrates the connection that Leah needs to heal her shame. This connection is available to her through her relationship with Jones and in participation with the community, which is itself interrupted by shame, drawing her away from liturgical practice in the form of dissociative behavior.

What Jones describes in her book about Leah's behavior is articulated as dissociation, which affect theorists would synonymously call an affective state of dysregulation. Work on affect regulation, which relates to body awareness, is crucial to trauma survivors. Rothschild corroborates this, but she warns about situations where people have little tolerance for touch as a result of abusive histories. For instance, she reports of a client petrified of casual touch, especially in public situations. This client asks her, even though her therapist, never to give her a pat on the shoulder on her way out of the door. Thus, Rothschild points out that working with the body and touching the body after trauma are not necessarily synonymous; in fact, she asserts that often *not*

[36] Jones, *Trauma and Grace,* 3-4.

*touching* preserves bodily integrity.[37] Not touching indicates a respect of the boundaries merged in touch and allows for trust to build between two parties. In addition, not touching in these cases communicates respect and therefore provides an opportunity for the disinterment of shame. An awareness of this appreciation of boundaries is critical to Christian officiants, who impose touch, not the least of which because they are situated within positions of power.

However damaging touch can be, Rothschild considers it a critical aspect of recovery from trauma. In her client's case, she aimed to increase the client's tolerance and positive affect at the moment of touch.[38] In therapeutic environments, teaching the tolerance of touch generally begins with helping clients gain body awareness and even tolerance of touching their own bodies.[39]

As these examples reveal, the effects of touch are complex and multifaceted. A good touch indicates friendship, care, love, or interest-excitement and intimates welcomed proximity. Alternatively, a bad touch is unwanted, rejected, perhaps even painful. The confusing touch complicates both of these because it signifies a painful touch from someone who represents love and protection. This could be from an abusive parent, or from another kind of authority figure whose role is to protect: the priest, the doctor, a day care worker, a close friend, a partner or spouse. Further, during the

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[37] Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Treatment* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), xiv.

[38] Ibid., 144-5.

[39] Fisher, "Sensorimotor Approaches to Trauma Treatment," 172-175.

experience of being touched, simple categories often disintegrate, making the moment of touch affectively charged and perhaps full of meaning yet difficult to decipher.

Part of the delicacy of touch resides in its ability to inter shame, especially in cases of abuse that provoke types of dissociation. However, touch, especially informed touch, also has the potential to disinter shame. This is because shame does not have the same emotional expression or release as other affects, for example, the ability to scream when angry or to cry when sad. Rothschild asserts that although shame does not appear to discharge from the body "acceptance and contact" relieve shame.[40] Inhibitory and interred shame thus dissipates under "very special circumstances – the nonjudgmental, accepting contact of another human being."[41] Ultimately, shame's disinterment and the amelioration of the detrimental conditions that interred shame perpetuates demand safe connections with other people. Such connections have specific qualities as nonjudgmental contact. The iteration of liturgical practices of touch provides a unique forum for this type of physical connection needed precisely for the disinterment of shame.

[40] Rothschild, *The Body Remembers*, 62.

[41] Ibid.

## The Potential of Touch to Disinter Shame

Touch is, above all, intimate.[42] Through touch, a body senses another body's nearness, presence, even its warmth. Although touch has the capacity to seriously harm and shame, it also represents the vital contact between bodies required to address shame. So indispensable, touch contains within it the possibility to participate in shame's disinterment. First, touch transforms affect, accounting also for its amplification in any particular encounter; this includes morphing negative affect into positive forms of affectivity.[43] Nurturing and non-judgmental touch stimulates the interest that shame truncates, rendering a body both present and vulnerable or exposed. The restoration of interest or positive affect opens up the potential for the transformation of a traumatic past narrative about shame. Second, touch of this sort validates, affirms, and acknowledges the self, constituting being. In this sense, the haptic expands the conception of the optic radiating a somatic message that one is perceived and recognized in the world. Furthermore, touch's inherent relationality and the way that it constitutes a distinct form of empathy enables the formation of bonds and affiliations so essential to bringing shame into full view. Without such connection, the hidden body in shame prevails. Approaching these distinct ways that touch operates to reveal shame, disempowering its detrimental effects, facilitates a potential pathway of disinterment through touch, providing at least

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[42] See Peter J. Marston, Michael L. Hecht, & Tia Robers, "'True Love Ways': The Subjective Experience and Communication of Romantic Love," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 4, no. 4 (1987); Marston et. al show that touch is one of the greatest indicators of partner's expression of love, second only to the words, "I love you."

[43] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 1024.

two means through which shame can be acknowledged and potentially repaired. This is not to say that touch creates a dramatic change in shame immediately, but rather to assert that the body responds to touch, and if shame is interred in the body as an affect, touch can potentially help release shame from its toxic grip on an individual. Insofar as I am considering a Christian practice of touch, examining what touch actually achieves adds another element for consideration.

## Transforms Affect

One of the most compelling and intriguing aspects of touch is its ability to alter an individual's affective state. The organ, as skin, touched, elicits a somatosensory perception that leads to neural networks in the brain perceiving a change. When the body is touched, Antonio Damasio writes in *Descartes' Error*, "the brain constructs a transient representation of local body change, different from the previous representation of that area."[44] The processing of constitutional changes "rapidly triggers a wave of additional body-state changes which further deviate the overall body state from the base range."[45] Therefore, not restricted solely to the part of the body being touched, touch affects the whole body, or the organ of flesh, as well as its interior.[46] Signifying an affective encounter, touch stimulates neural networks, triggering affect, and within this encounter, the physical – flesh – and affective – neurobiological response – converge.

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[44] Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, 263.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Chrétien, *The Call and Response*, 92-93.

Aristotle's strongest argument for the importance of touch comes at the end of his treatise, *On the Soul*. He privileges the haptic over the visual, insisting on the foundational and critical aspects of touch, which provide affective charges, what Aristotle calls "sensation."

> But if a body has sensation, it must be either simple or compound. And simple it cannot be; for then it could not have touch, which is indispensable. This is clear from what follows. An animal is a body with soul in it: every body is tangible, i.e. perceptible by touch; hence necessarily, if an animal is to survive, its body must have tactual sensation. All the other senses, e.g. smell, sight, hearing, apprehend through media; but where there is immediate contact the animal, if it has no sensation, will be unable to avoid some things and take others, and so will find it impossible to survive.[47]

In this passage, Aristotle asserts what research in psychology, affect theory, and neuroscience has come to support –that existence depends upon touch. He ratifies touch as vital, even urgent, as it connects not only one body to another but also the body to itself. For Aristotle, flesh and skin contain the soul. He writes, "Flesh is 'the medium' of touch," not the organ, "the real organ being situated further inward."[48] The soul perceives the movement, contingency, and sensation of touch, and being so moved, it is altered. He adds, furthermore, that "All sense-perception is a process of being so affected."[49] Thus, touching stimulates affect, and while affect constitutes sensation for Aristotle, it is a sensation perceived by the soul.

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[47] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, II.11.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

Touch establishes an external connection between two people as flesh meets flesh, which also offers an internal union, for Aristotle at the soul level. The sensory, somatic response to the touch collides in such a moment with the social, external human interaction. Although the harmful effects of touch cannot be denied, research has shown that even brief skin to skin contact procures a positive affective incitement.[50]

In addition, the undeniable and positive affective impact of touch occurs with or without conscious awareness. In research conducted by Jeffrey D. Fisher and Marvin Rytting Richard Heslin, subjects handed a library card were touched during the exchange; some subjects knew ahead of receiving the card that a touch would occur, while others did not. The results of this exchange showed that "a casual touch of a very short duration in a Professional/Functional situation had positive consequences for the recipient."[51] In addition, the affective response of the recipients who were *not* prompted, that is they were not told that they would be touched, reacted similarly. Both those who knew they would be touched, and those who were touched and had no knowledge that touch was a part of the research, reacted positively to the touch. Thus, whether or not the touch was perceived, it generally had a positive effect on the recipient's affective responses.[52] In this case, "a touch (of less than one second) had the power to make people feel better,"[53] whether they realize it or not.

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[50] Jeffrey D. Fisher, Marvin Rytting Richard Heslin, "Hands Touching Hands: Affective and Evaluative Effect of and Interpersonal Touch," *Sociometry* 39, no. 4 (1976).

[51] Ibid., 419.

[52] Ibid., 420.

Affective encounters of this sort, bypass consciousness at first meeting and have the capacity to create a new experience, startling the self and drawing the body into the present moment. This physical jolt has the potential to detach the moment of touch from past meaning. While this potential is not always realized, especially for survivors of trauma, plausibly, touch offers opportunities for critical moments of transformation, disrupting and subsuming the present immediately, totally. Thus, touch makes a cognitive and somatic fissure in present occurrences, drawing attention to the body as well as to the connection that transpires between two people in the act of the touch.

Recent research in the neurosciences shows that shared representations of the experience of touch, and pain, occur in the human brain; touch increases these empathetic responses.[54] The "observation of tactile stimuli delivered to other individuals" induces activity in an observer's somatosensory cortical areas.[55] This means that not only being personally touched, but also watching someone else being touched can activate an area of the brain sensitive to touch. Therefore, watching someone being touched elicits a similar affective response and transformation to that experienced by the one actually touched.[56]

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[53] Ibid.

[54] See Michael J. Banissy and Jamie Ward, "Mirror-touch Synesthesia is Linked with Empathy," *Nature Neuroscience* 10 (2007): 815-816; Keysers C, Wicker B, Gazzola V, Anton JL, Fogassi L, Gallese V., "A Touching Sight: SII/PV Activation During the Observation and Experience of Touch," *Neuron* 42, no. 2 (2004): 335-346; Blakemore SJ, Bristow D, Bird G, Frith C, Ward J., "Somatosensory Activations During the Observation of Touch and a Case of Vision—Touch Synaesthesia," *Brain* 128 (2005):1571-1583; Schaefer M., Flor H., Heinze H.J., Rotte M., "Dynamic Modulation of the Primary Somatosensory Cortex during Seeing and Feeling a Touched Hand," *Neuroimage* 29 (2006): 587-592.

[55] Ilaria Bufalari, Taryn Aprile, Alessio Avenanti, Francesco Di Russo, and Salvatore Maria Aglioti, "Empathy for Pain and Touch in the Human Somatosensory Cortex," *Cerebral Cortex* (2007), 2554.

The neurobiological research on touch affirms that touch, even casual and unrecognized touch, makes an impact, a potentially positive impact on people even if the touch is merely observed. This has ramifications for practices of touch conducted in ecclesial settings.

However, an important factor to recall about shame when discussing the positive impact of touch and empathetic responses to the touch of another is that shame inhibits empathy. The person in shame avoids attention and empathetic connection even though these ameliorate shame. In order to cognitively process and then produce empathetic behavior, the body must necessarily somatically process, replicate, or perceive the other; shame interferes with this phenomenon, even though shame relies on connection and empathy for amelioration.[57] Again, shame presents the double bind. Even so, the empathetic connection fostered through touch provides an opportunity for shame's disinterment, because casual touch can produce positive affect, even if in some cases access to that touch is inhibited. Disinterring shame depends on connection. Touch at least offers a moment where such connection is possible.

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[56] Vittorio Gallese and Corrado Sinigglia, "What is so Special about Embodied Simulation," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 15, no. 11 (2011): 1.

[57] Schulte-Rüther et al., "Theory of Mind Mechanisms,"1368. Studies have shown that mere observation of another person performing an action recruits partly the same 'circuitry' elicited by the execution of the observed action. More specifically, this circuitry involves supplementary motor area (SMA), pre-SMA, pre-motor cortex, the supramarginal gyrus, intraparietal sulcus and the superior parietal lobe, see Singer, "The Neuronal Basis and Ontogeny of Empathy and Mind Reading," 857. There are also studies that cite fault with this phenomenon.

## Acknowledges

In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle asserts that to touch also has significance as the capacity to name, to indicate, and to acknowledge. For example, touching a person dignifies him/her by recognizing existence, therefore supporting and endorsing life. At its most basic then, touch acknowledges being, human *being*. For Aristotle, touch signifies multiple dimensions of being. This notion of touch redresses the diminished sense of self-worth in shame, as it confers respect through acknowledgement.

The quality that touch possesses to ratify existence, and which is highlighted by Aristotle, also figures in the Bible where Thomas touches the wounds of Christ to know that Christ is real. Similarly, Jesus appears to the disciples in Luke 24: 36-49, imploring their touch, to verify his presence and gain their trust. He says to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."[58] Therefore, biblically, touching ratifies being in a way that intensifies the notion of establishing presence through sight. Touching substantiates existence and solidifies the essence of being.

Thus, the result of affective transformation in touch amplifies and validates a person's being. As Jean-Louis Chrétien states, "The exercise of touch is indistinguishable from the experience of touch, since touch delivers us to the world through a unique act of presence."[59] Touch communicates being and presence by communicating, "You are here

[58] Luke 24:38-39.

to me." In this way, touch confirms the visual realm. Conversely, to refuse to see, name, or touch another signifies a failure to recognize that person's existence or presence. Not to be touched is to remain unrecognized. This is the predicament of the neglected child. However, I would counter that in the case of trauma, if a person does not want to be touched, respecting that wish creates a similar result of acknowledging that person with respect and worthiness.

Authentic recognition begins to combat the feelings of diminished worth so characteristic of shame through touch. Thus met through touch, a person relates to another person. This tactile part of relating defies embodied shame that communicates a body's unbelonging. Authentic and nurturing touch ratifies belonging conveying relationship and reestablishing the interest that shame truncated in the first place.

Belonging is a key component in the Christian community. Jesuit Priest Dennis Smolarski remarks in his book *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice* that inherent in sacraments and multiple practices within the liturgy, "Human communication mediated through touch is a mystery, part of the mystery of human flesh and spirit created in the image and likeness of God."[60] Touch thus brings to bear the Imago Dei affording an opportunity to recognize the Christian self, reflecting back to Augustine's notion that there is no shame in wearing the cross, and that the cross in fact blesses such shame.

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[59] Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Call and Response*, trans. Anne A. Davenport (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 85.

[60] Dennis C. Smolarski, S.J., *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 18.

## The Imposition

The imposition of a cross on the forehead on Ash Wednesday, the initiation of Lent, provides one entrance point for an analysis of shame and touch in the tradition. Repeated yearly, the practice elucidates what Dirk Lange considers in *Trauma Recalled,* the liturgical event as a ritual remembering, a constant return both to the traumatic events that happened to Christ on the cross and the joy inherent in Christ's resurrection.[61] Later, I show how this practice, along with touch and shame, has implications for a theological interpretation of Christ and the cross.

Lange argues that the iteration of liturgy is not simply a ritualistic return to the ineffable event, captured initially in written form, but rather "a continual return of that which cannot be captured in the event."[62] The liturgical iteration then, for Lange, cannot be fully grasped, as it refers to something that is essentially present only in memory. Thus, in practice, with the Christian entering into the Christian narrative through liturgical participation, some "force" returns "in the celebration to disrupt anew."[63] Lange calls this present unsettling by a past memory a "rupture," which continually intrudes upon the present moment.[64] Lange's analysis narrates the Christ events as sharing the inexplicability of trauma, which the liturgy also bears. This means that within the liturgy

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[61] Lange, *Trauma Recalled*, 1-2.

[62] Ibid., 132.

[63] Ibid., 10.

[63] Ibid., 141.

[64] Ibid., 1 and 142.

moments of rupture exist that bring the past immediately into the present, while constituting the present in a formidable way.

Taking the imposition of ashes as a moment of touch that both constitutes and intensifies Lange's concept of a rupture of some present force or memory calls into question whether the imposition of the ashes literally extends shame, whether the gesture is a form of writing shame on the body, connecting to Christ's experience of shame. This writing of shame onto the body in ash reflects Lange's notion of writing as signification of something passive emerging that gets to the impossibility of language in the traumatic event. At the moment of imposition, the haptic also converges with other affective experiences to witness that event. A prayer is recited as the touch is imposed, and in each prayer a trace of the Edenic narrative remains, including its preoccupation with sin, guilt, and death.[65] What happens to the body, or how is the body shaped when the haptic, phonic, and optic meet in intentional and meaningful ways? As in each case of touch, the affective encounter - the implicit, non-verbal, somatic aspect to interrelating –remains.[66] When the encounter with God, as Jesuit Priest Dennis Smolarski observes, is made with the body, then the somatic experience of touch can been seen to take on a pivotal role in

[65] I turn to the *Baltimore Catechism Three* (Charlotte, NC: Saint Benedict Press, 2010) used primarily before Vatican II, and to the United States Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (New York: Doubleday, 1994) based on Vatican II principles and employed primarily after 1985. The catechisms are useful, together and separately, as both tools of learning and as underlying the primary assumptions enacted in the practice of Ash Wednesday.

[66] I use this term in accordance with the neurobiological description detailed in relationship to right brain processing in Margaret Wilkinson's *Changing Minds in Therapy: Emotion, Attachment, Trauma, and Neurobiology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), 85-102. The term is also interestingly a key theological expression in Shelly Rambo's *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

Christian practice.

## Ashes

The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday marks Jesus's initial forbearance in the desert where Satan tempts him prior to the crucifixion. Traditionally a day of fasting, Ash Wednesday initiates a period of penance, which culminates in Easter, the celebration of Christ's Resurrection. At its best, the liturgy of Ash Wednesday purposively seeks to join the Christian self with the Christ story. This provides a forum for facing and naming shame in Christian practice. The provision for the acceptance and subsequent disinterment of shame happens in two ways. First, the liturgy encourages the recognition and acceptance of humanity as fragile and mortal; part of this condition, as Augustine continually asserts, includes a full affective life of which shame is an indelible part. However, the commemoration of Ash Wednesday also provides a forum for mourning and grieving Christ's own mortality. Through this mourning, the aspects of pain and suffering that result from shame can also be processed. Second, in shame, always lies the loss of connection; affectively this is the loss of interest-excitement. In Augustine, it constitutes the severing of the divine tie. Yet while the ashes mark the lonely sinner of the Christian tradition, inherent in this practice, the promise of new life also persists; that is, a renewed life into a community of those similarly marked. Such reflection and renewal provided by practices in which the Christian participates year after year offer a pathway to the disinterment of shame.

Nowhere better than in the prayers recited during the receipt of ashes are these themes reflected. According to the old (1969) liturgy, the words from Genesis 3:19 accompany the imposition: "Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return." These words echo those that Adam and Eve hear after eating from the fruit of the forbidden tree, and they foretell the mortification and death of Jesus' mortal self on the cross. With these words, the recipient of the ashes joins the Edenic narrative, entering into mortification, admitting a humble mortal status and renouncing pride. Current recitations that accompany the imposition of ashes in the Catholic liturgy employ a moderated version of the Genesis event. Although less explicit than Genesis 3:19, the message is similar, "Turn away [or repent] from Sin and be faithful to the Gospel." In other services, Mark 1:15 may be recited, "Repent and believe in the good news!" This version emphasizes the promise of rebirth and renewal. Ultimately, each recitation communicates the ways in which the Christian self understands herself in the world, as mortal and susceptible to suffering, but always engaged in the possibility of renewal.

*Mortality and Mourning*

According to the Baltimore Catechism, ashes "keep us in mind of our humble origin" and signify the necessity of penance inherent in human life, presumably as a result of the first sin.[67] The more recent *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, updated by the Vatican in 2001, states that "The act of putting on ashes symbolizes

[67] *Baltimore Catechism Three,* Lesson Twenty-Seventh, Q1077: 251.

fragility and mortality, and the need to be redeemed by the mercy of God."[68] Harking back to the symbolic palms of Palm Sunday the year before that have been burnt, or destroyed, the ashes illustrate a necessity for reflection on mortality. Mortality reflects human nature biologically, but it also connects – at least for Augustine – directly to the punishment Adam and Eve suffer in their affected bodies. The image of the ash operates as both a stain and a signification of such loss and eventual death. As Augustine tells readers again and again, after the Fall, human life finds itself doubly mortal, as inherently in shame and suffering death.

The perception of ashes as signaling mourning has historical roots that relate to Christian practice, the Genesis event, and to Christ's death. Thus, the practice of mourning reflects grieving that constitutes multiple types of losses: the loss of some aspect of self; the loss of immortality, which makes death and imperfection a natural part of human life; and the reality of suffering, also a part of life, but amplified in Christ's own suffering and subsequent death on the cross. Mourning is also critical for the disinterment of shame because it allows a cleansing of the body. Grieving loss disempowers the shame associated with loss and pathology, so that what remains can be transformed into something different, something closer to the more primal shame of attachment.

Thus, aligned with death, the ashes recall Christ's suffering and death. If liturgy is the participation of the individual Christian in a story, as the ashes come from the

[68] "Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines," The Holy See, accessed September 7, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/ documents/ rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html#Chapter%20Two.

celebration that inaugurates the suffering and subsequent loss of Christ's human body, then the recipient also mourns this loss. It is not simply a loss of Christ's human body; it also constitutes a loss of the human body's dignity and signifies the shame experience.

The ashes on the forehead also refer to suffering: the suffering of Adam and Eve, of Christ, and of human life always directed toward death. Ashes on the forehead as the seat of shame, tied to suffering, shed light on the complicated relationship between shame and mourning. In the case of this event, it is mourning for the loss of perfection in Eden, the loss of Jesus, and the loss of heavenly perfection. Mourning is also bound up with the image of the cross, implying Jesus's death and his own shame.

While the ashes mark "mortality" and "fragility" as suffering, signifying shame, paired with Augustine's notion of the cross on the forehead as covering and touching shame, they also communicate that witnessing pain and shame elicits no shame. In such a way, the cross of ash indicates that shame persists, and even aligned with Christ and Christ's pain there is no shame in attachment.

*Renewal*

While Ash Wednesday marks the mortification into which the Christian enters on Ash Wednesday, the ashes also signify a promise of renewal. The Vatican asserts, "The faithful who come to receive ashes should be assisted in perceiving the implicit internal significance of this act, which disposes them towards conversion and renewed Easter

commitment."[69] According to the catechism a "*conversion of the heart*"[70] must always accompany the external act of imposing ashes. The touch functions as an "indispensable" component of conversion during the imposition of the ashes on Ash Wednesday. The ashes always make contact with the forehead, Augustine's seat of shame, and are always perceptible. Thus, the ashes serve as a persistent reminder of shame naturally held in the self.

Renewal thus signifies the interior conversion which constitutes the pathway to disinterment that touch both initiates and seals. Within the Christian community, the ash indicates that individuals do not bear shame alone. The ashes expose shame as shared as a part of life capable of being ameliorated through touch and relationship, though not eradicated or discarded because the experience of shame indicates the attachment to the community in the first place. Thus assimilated within this community, the ashes acknowledge that shame is natural and blessed part of human affective life.

## The Implications for Christology

Although the imposition of ashes signifies an entry into Lent prior to the crucifixion, it foreshadows the suffering and death of Christ at the site of the affective body. Where does participating in the imposition of ashes on the forehead take the Christian in relation to Christ? Primarily, the event, emphasized by the moment of touch,

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[69] Ibid.

[70] United States Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Part Two, Section Two, Chapter Two, Article 4, 1430: 399.

takes the Christian to the affected and affective body in shame. The practice of the touch emphasizes the body, including Christ's body, individual Christian bodies, and the body of the Christian community conceived of as church. In this instant of touch, the bodies collide to reveal shame in a new somatic and affective way.

First, the attention to body, affectivity, and mortality assists Christian recipients of the touch in taking incarnation seriously. The touch reinforces the importance of incarnation through which Christ is known as fully human, his shame constituting part of that humanity. This is not the toxic shame and humiliation of his suffering but rather the true, natural shame that Augustine places on the face. Furthermore, "Taking the embodiment of Jesus seriously draws attention to Jesus's relationality, his touching and healing of people."[71] This Jesus, as the affected one, touches and is touched in love. Affect in this case, the true shame presaged by interest-excitement evident in the healing touch, takes on the notion given to it by Julia Kristeva when she says, "affect," while acknowledging lack, "gives greater importance to the movement toward the other in mutual *attraction*."[72] In this sense, the affected, incarnated Christ participates affectively with humanity in mutual attraction.

A duality in touch and shame emerges affectively in that what must be taken into account is that Christ as incarnated, touching and healing, is also Christ crucified, suffering in shame. What Christ experiences in this time is not only the true shame,

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[71] Riet Bon-Storms, "A Challenge to Change Developments in Feminist Theology and Feminist Christology," *HTS* 61, no. 1&2 (2005), 58.

[72] Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 155.

affectively located at the low intensity end of Tomkins shame-humiliation pair, but the very intense humiliation that relates to Christ's suffering. That he undergoes shame publicly, willingly, notwithstanding tremendous suffering emphasizes the importance of facing and sharing shame despite the difficulty and pain.

While feminist critiques often move away from Christ's suffering as a useful narrative, Sharon Betcher actually moves towards it. Betcher claims that staying with suffering and pain is crucial for a theology of disability, especially true since the central image of Christianity is wounded body and victim of imperial power.[73] She views Christ affectively, developing a Christology that allows a "remaining" with Jesus in his shame and suffering as a model for staying with others in pain.[74] She writes, "Instead of assuming the crucifixion of Jesus as an ontologically unique moment within a historically realist perspective and therefore a metaphysical truth to be believed toward salvation (that is, toward the anesthetizing of pain"), we read Christianity as a practice that allows suffering to speak."[75] To this, I would add that this posture allows shame to come to the fore, where it can be disinterred. Although it is not the totality of Christ's time on the cross, drawing attention to the suffering involved in facing shame recognizes suffering as

[73] Sharon Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 70-71.

[74] Ibid.; See also Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma, 68,* as mentioned, remaining is a key term in Rambo's theology of spirit.

[75] Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh,* 93.

a part of revealing shame. In the moment, Christ models the facing and sharing of shame. Thus, he refutes shame's interment.[76]

In the refusal to hide, to withdraw in shame, Christ also reveals his affected body and his vulnerability, unveiled, serving figuratively as a counter figure to Adam and Eve's cover-up.[77] Attention is drawn to Christ as body, in the mortal flesh. By doing this, his shame comes into view, not in a derogatory way, connecting to our most primal self. This is the potential of the shamed and humiliated Christ, attachment and love even in our suffering. This is the bodily connection that occurs through touching shame on the forehead. Through touch, bodies connect with the shame of Christ's most human self. The Ash Wednesday experience permits a facing shame, in a very intimate way, by imposing the cross on the forehead in community. The Christian recipient steps into a bodily knowing of shame at the imposition of ash on the forehead. The juxtaposition brings to the forefront – on the forehead in ash – shame's dependence on relationality, while toxic shame acts against that relationality.

The humiliated, publically shamed body of Christ also functions as an affective site of political struggle. Christ is the social agent that regulates affect. His is an affected body that affects other bodies, stimulating those bodies; in the case of shame, the withdrawal away from or attachment to God either increases or decreases shame but does not save it. "Affect is inherently political: bodies are part of an ecosocial matrix of other

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[76] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 454 and 480.

[77] This is problematized by Mark D. Jordan, who discusses the shame in talking about Christ's genitals, see *Telling Truths in Church: Scandal, Flesh, and Christian Speech* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 87.

bodies, affecting them and being affected by them; affect is part of the basic constitution of bodies politic."[78] Once again, Christ exemplifies the duality in shame – both the toxic shame suffered at the extreme of humiliation and the acceptance of shame as a part of the self that binds us to one another as our most vulnerable selves. One narrative is agonizing, the other mutually empowering. The latter is Christ in connection to God.

## The Cross

The cross is a fraught symbol in Christian thought. I have already noted that some theologians problematize the discourse of suffering related to Christology. Recent scholarship especially related to trauma and issues of race and gender have critiqued ideas of redemptive suffering aligned with the crucifixion.[79] Even though the cross perpetuates suffering, even giving a reason for suffering, and even though it has been used to justify war and violence, people still love it. Christians kiss the cross, adore and adorn the cross, and wear the mark on their foreheads as a reminder of their finitude. The cross reveals a connection and attachment to Christ; part of the love towards it relates to what particular work people envision happening at the site of the cross, whether that be

[78] John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic*, (Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 50.

[79] See for instance Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* and Jones, *Trauma and Grace*. See also Rita Nakashima and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search For What Saves Us* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993); Joann Terrell, *Power in the Blood? The Cross in the African American Experience* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1998); Marit Trelstad, ed. *Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 2006); William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers,1998).

salvation, reconciliation, or forgiveness. While exploring the work of the cross is critical, what I do here is explore this connection and attachment to Christ and the cross as both relate to affect.

The imposition of ashes on the forehead brings shame to the fore and demonstrates the paradox of the cross: that the cross along with shame both binds the Christian self to what it most loves and partially severs the self from that same object. The duality that both attracts and repels is reflected in the dynamics surrounding the cross. Furthermore, this twofoldness emerges in the symbol of the cross itself. Mark C. Taylor points out what he calls the "paradoxical nonbinary (a)logic" of the symbol of the cross: "As the threshold of absolute passage, the cross marks the intersection of ascent and descent that is the 'marriage of heaven and hell,'" symbolized on the way to Golgotha.[80] This paradox continues perpetuating the symbol of the ash, itself a symbol of the path to death. The question becomes: what does the imposition of ashes reveal about a theology of the cross that can both inter and disinter shame?

The yearly return to the cross imposed on the forehead of the lonely sinner is, in some degree, the return to the problem in the tradition where guilt and sin eclipse shame. When this happens, shame is easily forgotten and denied. Eclipsed by guilt, shame goes unaddressed and concealed by a narrative that makes the Christian guilty for Christ's death. This narrative, explored extensively in theologies of atonement, cannot get at the

[80] Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 13.

pernicious or binding nature of shame; thus, shame becomes not only interred in the self but also buried in a particular rhetoric.

Interment of shame also occurs in the justification of suffering that permits the cycles of shame – mentioned by feminist critiques of the cross that talk about the cross justifying violence. An affective reading of the cross shares with feminist theologians' concerns that lifting up salvation through suffering is problematic as it relates to shame. As Brock and Parker argue, the cross has been used as a symbol to perpetuate suffering. This concern is also shared by womanists like Delores Williams who have argued that, given black women's experiences of surrogacy in the United States, any links between suffering and salvation should be broken.[81] For instance, when the cross is interpreted by James Cone as "the burden we must bear in order to attain freedom," the link is perpetuated.[82] Cone envisions the cross as redemptive in that it represents the faith that "that God snatches victory out of defeat, life out of death, and hope out of despair, as revealed in the biblical and black proclamation of Jesus' resurrection."[83]

A different critique of this stance emerges in Shelly Rambo's *Spirit and Trauma* where she locates the promise not in the paradox of the cross as Cone does, but in the cross's "excess."[84] Her point is particularly compelling when placed within a haptic and affective frame. She asserts that the "theological meaning" of the cross "cannot be found

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[81] Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 148.

[82] James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2013), 148.

[83] Ibid., 150.

[84] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma,* 158.

in turning away or turning to the cross, but, instead, in the turning itself, the movements between that acknowledge a more tenuous relationship between death and life."[85] Acknowledgement of human experience lies at the fulcrum of this movement. Rambo's conception of turning emerges in the turn towards God, in our shame, reflected in Augustine's receipt of the cross on the forehead. It is this movement that connects participants both to one another and to God. The turning rather than being stagnant, or ever completed, always happens. The touch corroborates this, as Karmen Mackendrick states, "touch moves," as in being touched or moved by language.[86]

Also, Rambo asserts, "If we look between cross and resurrection, we are directed to a new way of being, to a form of life that is not triumphant. Instead, it is life configured as remaining."[87] Shame is figured in this step as a part of remaining that is neither mired in trauma nor relegated to promises of healing. Affectively this holds. It also corroborates Augustine's notion of Christ as an embodied bridge, remaining, between the two worlds Augustine envisions, connecting us to both, and with that connection, holding, touching our shame.

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Karmen Mackendrick, *Word Made Skin*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 61.

[87] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 127.

## Affectively Attuned Theology

Augustine understands the dualism in the idea of the cross on the forehead – that it is both his story and a shared story, and that neither his faith nor his own shame is something to feel ashamed about. Augustine also understands that this shame resides in the body. Denying shame represents a futile act; embracing it, and placing the cross upon it, or allowing shame to converge with a story about love and promise allows for the message of the Christian tradition as Augustine conceives of it to be more fully realized. Augustine asks for the cross to cover his shame, not to mask it, but to bless it, so that he may reach ever towards God and participate in the divine.

Fully aware of how trying to rid the self of shame leads to its harmful interment and theologically allows for its misinterpretation, Augustine welcomes shame promoting a theological anthropology where shame can function naturally as an affect that binds people to God and to others. Further, an affectively attuned theology understands that human life is made up of fractious affects, and that practice offers hope for renewal and conversion, not in order to purify and cleanse, but to become fully participating members of the Christian community who all bear shame. But to achieve this end, there always exists a need for conversion, marked by the yearly return in liturgy to Ash Wednesday. No perfect ending evolves; it all begins again, always repeating.

## Conclusion: Returning to the Practice

On Ash Wednesday, in a structure similar to the communion ceremony, each person walks towards the altar. The priests and Eucharistic ministers hold small glass and

ceramic bowls of black ash. Ominous in their own right, the ashes convey a paradoxical message, that life is both full of joy and full of grief. Walking toward the altar, reverent and in a posture of shame, the procession of congregants mirrors Jesus's journey to the desert.

And each bows her head to receive the cross of ash of the forehead. Augustine's words are palpable, "In no secret place do I keep the Cross of Christ, but bear it on my forehead," "because the forehead is the seat of the blush of shame." And in this moment of touch on Ash Wednesday, shame is seen, touched, blessed, and conjoined with death and mourning, but also with love, mercy, and bounty.

The body presents itself joining with the travails and trials of Christ's body; the corporeal reflects in the recitation, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." In the moment of touch, the body joins with the ashes, the past, the Jesus story, shame, and the reality of individual death but always, at once, in this life also joins in the promise that renewal. The renewal exists in the human touch. In the potential for rejoinder, for intimate connection, that exists in this touch. Touch makes one immediately known and not alone, recognizing individual self-worth and disinterring shame. The shame that remains, an inevitable and inherent part of affective life, is shared and not borne alone; instead, as it emerges, an entire ecclesial history subsumes it.

Within the movement of touch as an affective encounter, at the moment of touch in the imposition of ash on the forehead, shame both hinders and fosters human relating. The moment of touch, the affective element of touch, and touch's role embedded in practice are multi-dimensional bodily experiences fraught with risk and possibility. As

moments in which a mark of ash is made upon the body, this touch draws bodies both actually and symbolically into the Christian narrative. The mark has an implicit message about the Christian character reflecting the idea that in liturgy, a particular effort exists to form bodies. Each moment of touch assumes Lange's "present" which reflects practice that attempts to create a Christian character engaging in mortification while also seeking the promise of renewal in connection to God and the other. In each case, bodies are marked and formed, branded, figured, and reinforced in that conception. Reflected in the mark is what is remembered, but also what is absent. The symbol of the cross of ash on the forehead reflects not only Christ's death, but also his suffering and shame. The ash corroborates and reinforces the connection. The touch marks the return to the Christ event, embodies the remembering, while disrupting rote repetition, with its physical immediacy and its symbolic saliency established by both Christian texts and embodied Christian practice.

Understanding the potential for touch to offer bodily transformation emphasizes the concept of embodied practice, but it also addresses the whole person. As Jean-Louis Chrétien asserts, "touch unlocks for us and brings to us the root qualities that constitute every body as such."[88] The whole of the Christian thus engages in practice, the body both human and divine, with the touch of ash corroborating this. Clarifying where shame emerges and specifically addressing it, rather than allowing it to continue to be obscured by guilt and sin, allows the tactile affective encounter; that is, it allows for shame to be touched and so touched, named. Ultimately and most significantly, approaching shame

[88] Chrétien, *The Call and Response*, 93.

and the body in this way allows for a more unified self – mortal, divine, and with shame. This admission fosters acceptance in the Christian community of everyone and every part of the self, and "If one feels whole [*heil*] then the good," available throughout the Christian tradition, "serves to give joy, not to hide shame."[89]

[89]Wurmser, *Torment Me but don't Abandon Me*, 79.

# CHAPTER SIX

# CONCLUSION

*Fully faced, shame may become not primarily something to be covered, but a positive experience of revelation.*[1]

Helen Lynd

Shame lies at the core of the self. It exposes who and what the self loves most, but it also inhibits love, because steeped in toxic shame the self feels unlovable. This state of shame emerges when shame lies interred in the body, concealed by other affects and experiences. Shame viscerally draws bodies away from human and divine connection, emerging as a "sickness of the soul."[2] To discover the affective body in shame, I bring shame into view as undeniably biological and visceral, appearing corporeally, compelling the body to turn away. Rooted in the most primal self, shame as preverbal needs no words for expression. Shame informs the body, even as it often renders its bearer speechless and vulnerable before the eyes of a real or imagined other.

However detrimental shame might be, its primitive, more primal presentation in the self directs that self to its greatest attachments. Interest, excitement, and even joy ground the affective experience of shame, discontinuing abruptly when shame emerges. Severing the most viable and alive connections, shame erupts from the core of the self to arrest these positive experiences, truncating them, and leaving the self-exposed. But only through further exposure, turning to the other or to God in shame, only through facing the

[1] Lynd, *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, 20.

[2] Tomkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 387.

shame in reconnection with another, does repair occur. Only in the restoration of the authentic and precious connection that the self values most can shame be disinterred.

Through the lens of affect theory and trauma studies, I highlight shame's role in attachment, uncovering how in shame, without the availability of trusting human connection, part of the self escapes from view, cut off, and denied, itself buried away as bad or disgusting. Damaging attempts at alleviating shame emerge, engendering cycles of more shame or even rage. I expose, through Gilligan's work, the desperate clinging to pride and rage that seem to alleviate shame momentarily. Desperate attempts to diminish and bury shame occur in expressions of violence by those seeking to restore the pride of self-worth stolen by shame. However, these behaviors and choices fail to ameliorate shame, serving only to sever attachments needed for shame's repair. Alternatively, behaviors of withdrawal, avoidance, and pulling away eliminate the possibility of repair.

Uncovering the nature of shame to expose how it operates both inside and on bodies, I delve into Augustine's notion of shame, both recognized and named in his theology. Augustine places shame both on the body as *pudenda* and in the body as concupiscence linked to original sin. A cycle of shame occurs in his rhetoric, perpetuated by the *pudenda*, for which humanity, according to Augustine, should feel more shame. This is expressed in his prescription that Adam and Eve, along with their progeny, "cover-up." Thus, Augustine grieves shame's presence. In his efforts to veil shame, however, he also conceals the primal, prelapsarian shame he initially recognizes. This shame, like the preverbal shame of affect theory, signals attachment and binds humans

one to the other, in theological terms, to God. This is the shame that reveals something to the bearer and points to what is loved.

This binding occurs in Niebuhr's work as well, but when he writes *Nature and Destiny of Man,* the historical trajectory and natural human tendency to conceal shame has been well under way. In Niebuhr, shame makes an appearance under the guise of other affects. Niebuhr laments what he sees as the deterioration of human society in the wake of World War II, faulting, as Augustine does before him, Christian laxity in the turn towards God. In his diagnosis, he conceals shame, expressing it through his formulations of pride, sensuality, guilt, sin, and anxiety. Reconstructed, Niebuhr's argument locates shame at the root of pride as *hubris,* and sensuality as escape or withdrawal from God. His perception of ontological anxiety framed through the lens of affect theory uncovers a more corrosive problem. Niebuhr understands that violence to the self and others derives from a need to counter a sense of worthlessness that is shame's derivative and pride's motivation.

However, Niebuhr's slippage in languaging shame perpetuates its toxicity. Providing the fodder for more shame, Niebuhr isolates the guilty sinner figured in Adam, suggesting remorse and repentance for what he calls guilt and anxiety, but which actually appears as dysregulated shame. By separating this figure from others in shame, he dangerously perpetuates a sense of diminished self-worth and fails to get at the motivational structure of violence that is shame, even though throughout his work he presses the need to eliminate violence. He urges desire and commitment to God, but his rhetoric often contributes to the dynamic inherent in the shame of the unlovable self.

The shame interred in the unlovable self interferes with repair, and in shame, the Christian practitioner cannot participate fully in the event of Ash Wednesday. Focusing particularly on the moment of touch in the imposition of ashes on the forehead, I emphasize the affective encounter as having potential to begin to disinter shame by naming and acknowledging it. Shame in this moment can keep a participant from connecting to Christ through a misinterpretation of shame or a narrow view that it makes her undeserving. However, what is truly needed, as it was in Adam and Eve's case, is to reveal one's shame to God. Modeled through Christ as the connection to the most primal self, shame can be faced and shared with one another.

By uncovering the nature of shame, at once deleterious, primal, and shared, I expose what is at stake for the Christian self in shame. Theological discourse and practice that leave shame unacknowledged or concealed by other terms and experiences allow for shame's interment. Although many factors contribute to this phenomenon, this project focuses on how theology figures into a construction of the self in shame, interpreting shame as an experience that severs *and* that connects. The challenge for theology relates to how it names shame, fostering disinterment and repairing the pathologies that sever attachment in the first place. I press questions regarding the ways can theological rhetoric and practice support a facing of shame that does not support further concealment and that allows shame to be processed and repaired.

## Dangers of Interment

This brings me to the pivot point in shame, the crux of shame as an indicator of attachment. Whether that attachment is to God or to others, shame exhumed informs the self about who and what is most revered; it is a revelation. Touch informs this revealing. As a primary, non-verbal way of relating, touch regulates affects including shame in early attachment relationships. Touch is a conduit for the connection necessary to repair shame, even as it can perpetuate shame; both indicate attachment. Attachment and attunement repair shame, and unless theology understands this and lives into it, the problem of violence cannot be fully addressed. To ignore shame, or to shame, is to communicate that one is unworthy of love. This is detrimental because, as Léon Wurmser deftly expressed, "Unlovability is the core experience of shame. It comes together with desolate loneliness and sadness, and with that almost inevitably a wish to gain power over what seems to have been lost."[3]

Examining how shame is buried in the self promotes a theological awareness of the complexities of sin and guilt and how they so frequently disguise shame, which unrecognized, has deleterious effects. The consequences of shame concealed by guilt have gone relatively unexplored in the Christian tradition. Further, the traditional understanding of guilt and sin allows shame to be bypassed, masked, and unattended. This leads to shame's dangerous interment, but more fundamentally, it often results in a lack of recognition that shame functions as part of the human condition.

[3] Wurmser, *Torment Me, but don't Abandon Me*, 198.

For instance, in Niebuhr, the ideal Christian self feels anxious about original sin and, therefore, subjects the self to God. The remedy for the internal wound of original sin is repentance and submission. However, if human experience is described and understood in this way, while the experience of shame continues to go unaddressed or masked by guilt, both theoretically and practically, access to repair remains blocked; thus, the self remains isolated and lonely. As affect theory shows, unnamed, interred shame interferes with remorse, empathy, attachment, and its own regulation. I believe that the theoretical and rhetorical use of guilt and sin, therefore, needs to be continually revisited in order to further understand how language about guilt eclipses shame and leads to the toxic interment of shame in the body.

The stigma of original sin as an inherent wrong in the self supports the idea that the human experience includes shame, but used vituperatively, it supports an image of the Christian self as stigmatized, and again, ultimately isolated. The situation is complicated further by the focus on guilt, in both Niebuhr and in the liturgy of Ash Wednesday, where the shame of original sin lies beneath a veil of guilt, creating the image of the guilty sinner who is actually the self stigmatized by shame.

Obscuring human shame with the image of the lonely sinner in guilt is not productive to disinterring shame and extricating the root of violence, which I have shown is interred shame. When the belief exists that some part of the self is injured, deficient, or bad, the self is cut off or dispelled, believing itself unworthy of love. In order to combat internal shame as an inner sense of worthlessness, people hide themselves or escape from view, anesthetize themselves, or use violence in vain attempts to restore dignity and

eradicate shame. This unlovable self fights for what it has lost, either claiming love from the wrong sources or using aggression to take back the pride of self-worth. I reveal that both Augustine and Niebuhr understood that this inner sense of worthlessness provoked dangerous behavior and that both recommended that a turn towards God as a vulnerable human would ameliorate the situation, but the person in shame confronts a deeper, darker problem. Shame interred, while it points to attachment, inhibits attachment, impeding the connection even to God.

Acknowledging shame as foundational to human existence and human bonding retrieves shame from pathology and alleviates, at least to some degree, the shame for feeling shame. Augustine approaches this notion of shame as he celebrates the imposition of the cross on the forehead in Psalm 141. Recognizing shame as a biological affect releases shame from its role as stigmatizing, permitting an additional acceptance of the body as an epistemological source. Shame, partially truncating interest-excitement, viscerally communicates to the self both attachments to others and to God. The body, thus, knows through the experience of shame that it longs to connect to something other than itself: another body, another story, a divine tie. Shame, which emerges on the face, for Augustine on the forehead, presents itself on Ash Wednesday where ashes are imposed on the forehead. The innate, shared shame the faithful wear on their foreheads is, thus, through the imposition of the cross both held and touched.

Furthermore, since touching practices are abundant in Christian praxis, understanding what is at stake in touch is critical. This constitutes having an awareness of the traumatized body that cannot tolerate touch, as well as understanding that touch, even

the observation of it, fosters empathy. The painful state of shame can unfold and morph as a result of empathy "into a renewed sense of closeness to others."[4] Touch amplifies this sense of closeness. Shame, especially through touch, can create the sense of being undone or fragmented; both also peculiarly unite the self with others. The willingness to be vulnerable in shame creates an extraordinary level of relation and intimacy that can only be experienced when shame is faced.

This presses theology to work towards a disentangling of the bind between shame and sin so as to disinter shame in order that it might return to its innate social function of shame in relation. In the imposition of the cross on the forehead, shame occurs within what I call the logic of exposure, related to sight, which is emphasized through the haptic. The Christian narrative comes to fruition in the haptic, colliding with the forehead – Augustine's seat of shame. The cross itself brings to the individual being touched the reality of participation in the Christian community; this individual faces shame alongside Christ. Christ offers a glimpse of who we really are through grace, through touch, and through connection with others. In a very unique way then, I illustrate how the moment of touch confers, evokes, and blesses shame.

Ultimately, shame cannot be eradicated, but it can be approached, addressed, and therefore disinterred. In Augustine's words, shame can be ameliorated by grace. In Niebuhr's work, what takes on the nature of shame – anxiety and sin – cannot be entirely altered, but these can be faced, confronted, and then turned towards God. And the language of guilt and sin, specifically actual sin, need not be dismissed in a theology of

[4] Block Lewis, "Introduction," 26.

shame. This, I argue, is because empathic connections assuage shame; additionally, guilt fosters empathy. Thus, both guilt and shame operate in the self and contribute to a robust theological anthropology. Guilt as a response to a wrong act, repaired through remorse, disentangled from the perception of wrong in the self, encourages relationship, bonding, and empathetic connection. While shame confused with wrongdoing inters shame in the self and inhibits empathic connections, regulated shame serves to point to attachment and indicates interest-excitement, promoting social bonding and repairing shame.

## The Most Vulnerable Self

I set out in this dissertation to explore how shame functions in Christian formation through the lens of affect theory and trauma studies to move towards a more distinct theological understanding of shame. Throughout the writing process, the project has both expanded and narrowed, revealing aspects of shame that have far more implications for theology than I initially imagined. Through the lens of affect theory and trauma studies, I discuss shame as interred in the body, initially as a result of its propensity to be repressed and denied by the self, and subsequently traded for other affects or experiences, such as guilt. Shame occurs and is perpetuated in suffering and trauma, but it has a far more common and mundane role in human life. Shame informs the self about its most intimate human relating. The questions about shame and guilt fluctuated as the dissertation evolved, pushing me to move past distinctions about shame and guilt to begin to ask questions about shame's role in attachment. Exploring shame became less about delineating it from guilt and more about discerning how it functions to both connect and

disconnect humanity from each other and from God. Unearthing shame from theological rhetoric and practice became less about diagnosis of pathology and more about understanding that being seen by the other in shame connects an individual to his or her most primal self and to what he or she loves most.

Stepping into a terrain of theological anthropological literature through Augustine and Niebuhr, who intend purposively to diagnose the human condition, I disentangle their rhetoric to uncover the role of shame in their works. Both do this diagnostic work in historical contexts that each sees rife with human suffering and violence. Etiologists and theologians at once, each wrestles with the Eden scene in their attempt to discern and demarcate human pain while relying on discourse about sin and guilt. Analysis of their works leads to the excavation of shame in their writing, a shame that can emerge as toxic, but also a shame that originates in the body betraying attachment and the need for connection. For Augustine, this is a prelapsarian shame. For both Augustine and Niebuhr, a turn towards God in shame but seeking reattachment initiates repair. The dual concept of shame, as toxic or innate, unfolds and has implications for theology in terms of its conceptions of sin as a stigma or imperfection, its inconspicuous role underlying the guilt-ethic, and in its perceived amelioration through violence or eradication. When shame contributes to violence, the problem is toxic, unregulated shame, not innate shame that binds Christians to each other.

Delving deeper into shame uncovered a dual conception of humility. Although affectively, humility, prescribed by both Augustine and Niebuhr, shares some characteristics with toxic shame, I show through Pattison's work that a "true humility"

emerges and includes a sense of self-worth characteristic of innate shame that toxic shame undermines. This humility, modeled by Christ, embodies the beauty of the revelation of shame, which returns us to the most primal attachments. Although probing deeper into humility exceeded the frame of this project, disentangling humility from pride and shame begins to reveal a more reparative notion of its function in Christian theology. This notion of humility does not lead to the embodiment of a traditionally perceived low view of oneself shared with toxic shame but rather points to the recognition of oneself as innately connected to God, or the divine, in Christian life to Christ. This starting point for innate shame has implications for the psychology of religion and theology in research concerning humility, shame, and pride.

The work to be done is daunting; the confusion around shame as deleterious or as playing an important role in attachment necessarily needs to be elucidated for theology to contribute to the growing problem of violence. For instance, challenges must be made to the promotion of the lonely sinner in guilt; instead, a more fruitful focus would be on the Christian self as possessing shared, innate shame, which connects Christians to both others and to God. To face shame and start to destabilize the motivational structures of violence is more than a challenge. Toxic shame as an impediment to human bonding has far reaching implications, even more than I have portrayed. Excavating innate shame that can be tolerated, not interred, and which indicates attachment is a process that needs further exploration by scholars in psychology and religion and pastoral theology. Developing theological anthropologies that take account of the whole person demands

sophisticated and thorough interdisciplinary analyses, drawing from the new and rapidly changing fields of affect theory and neurobiology.

A general theological recognition and acceptance of where and how shame appears in theology has far-reaching and practical implications for the role of the body and sexuality in Christian life, for the acceptance of marginalized bodies, for the resistance to violence, for the traumatized body, and for social justice. Accepting the presence of shame, along with its potential to do harm and good, enables a more comprehensive theological anthropology. Recognized and embraced, shame increases empathetic connections and fosters the ability for a more integrated participation in Christian life: when the shamed part of self is not damned, it is free to engage in relationships, exposing vulnerability, flesh, and humanness.

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You, Young Gweon. "Shame and Guilt Mechanisms in East Asian Culture." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 51 (1997): 57-64.

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## EDUCATION

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| Ph.D. | School of Theology, Boston University, Boston, 2015 |
| | Dissertation: *Shame and the Formation of Christian Bodies* |
| | Advisor: Shelly Rambo |
| M.A. | Religion and Psychiatry, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, 2010 |
| M.L.A. | Comparative Literature, University of South Florida, Tampa, 2001 |
| B.A. | Literature and French, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, 1997 |

## PUBLICATIONS

### Edited Volumes

forthcoming *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, co-edited with Shelly L. Rambo. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

### Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

2014 "Reading *The Road* with Paul Ricoeur and Julia Kristeva: The Human Body as a Sacred Connection." *Text Matters: A Journal of Literature, Theory, and Culture* 4: 99-115.

2013 "'First' and 'Third World' Feminisms: Does Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy Offer a Way to Bridge the Gap?" *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies* 4/1: 57-70.

### Book Chapters

forthcoming "Appetitive, Aversive, and Affective Encounters with the Religiosity of Taste," In *Studies in Bodies and Religion*, edited by Jennifer Baldwin. Lanham: Lexington Books.

forthcoming "Unspeaking Trauma: Shame, Bodies, and Cycles of Violence." In *Post-Traumatic Public Theology*, edited by Shelly L. Rambo and Stephanie N. Arel. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

in press "Paul Ricoeur and Mary Daly: A Dialogue on the Dis-covery and Attestation of Feminine Religious Symbols." In *Studies in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*, edited by Dan Stiver and Greg Johnson. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

in press "Theorizing the Exchange between the Self and the World: Paul Ricoeur, Affect Theory, and the Body." In *Paul Ricoeur and the Body*, edited by Gonçalo Marcelo and Cyndie Sautereau. Lanham: Lexington Books.

**Book Reviews**

2015 Review of Gina Messina-Dysert. *Rape Culture and Spiritual Violence*. New York: Routledge. x+127 pp. Claremont Journal of Religion.

2013 Review of Carrie J. Boden McGill, and Sola M. Kippers. *Pathways to Transformation: Learning in Relationship*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing 2012. xi+387 pp. *Teaching Theology and Religion*.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2014 American Association of University Women Dissertation Fellow, Washington DC

2013 Practical Theology Graduate Scholarship, School of Theology, Boston University

2012 Doctor of Theology Fellowship, School of Theology, Boston University

2011 Practical Theology Graduate Scholarship, School of Theology, Boston University

2011 Doctor of Theology Fellowship, School of Theology, Boston University

2011 Springboard Funding, School of Theology, Boston University

2010 Practical Theology Graduate Scholarship, School of Theology, Boston University

2010 Doctor of Theology Fellowship, School of Theology, Boston University

2010 Merit Scholarship, School of Theology, Boston University

2009 Graduate Merit Award, Union Theological Seminary

2008 Graduate Merit Award, Union Theological Seminary

## CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

**Papers**

2015 "To Touch or Not to Touch: The Pope, Religious Practice, and Shame," Trauma and Lived Religion Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands, June 3-5.

2015 "Shame and the Haptic: Affective and Reparative Dimensions of Touch in the Christian Tradition," Pacific Northwest American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, March 27-29.

2014 "Mimesis and Being-in-the-World: Ricoeur's Philosophy as a Means for Understanding the Affective Turn," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, New Orleans, Louisiana, October 24-26.

2014 "Biocentrism on Affective Grounds: The Dissipation of the Ontological Separation between Animal, Human, and (?) God," International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture, Leuven, Belgium, September 18-20.

2013 "Theorizing the Exchange between the Self and the World: Paul Ricoeur, Affect Theory, and the Body," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Eugene, Oregon, October 24-27.

2013 "Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Method: How it Influenced Liberation Theology and Practical Theology," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Eugene, Oregon, October 24-27.

2012 "Redefining Redemption: The Female and Holy, Whole Body as a Source in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture, Copenhagen, Denmark, October 19-21.

2012 "An Interpretation of the Holy, Whole Body in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," Boston Theology Graduate Student Conference, Boston, Massachusetts, March 23-25.

2011 "Understanding Shame: Ricoeur's Philosophy as a Guide," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 28-30.

2011 "Diagnosing the Wounds of War: How Theology Speaks to Shame," Journey to Healing International Conference, Belfast, Ireland, March 9-13.

2010 "Life as a Gift: Ricoeur's Liberative Praxis," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Montreal, Canada, November 5-7.

2010 "The Body and Movement: The Road to Healing," Mid-Atlantic Conference for Popular Culture, Arlington, Virginia, October 29-31.

2009 "The Body as Meaning Ricoeur's Hermeneutics, Narrative, and the Flesh," The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Arlington, VA, October 23-25.

2009 Respondent to round table discussion on Ricoeur's philosophical theology/theological philosophy, The Society for Ricoeur Studies, Arlington, VA, October 23-25.

2009 "Transformation and Healing: The Possibility for Growth in the Emergence of Symbol," From Ricoeur to Action, Canterbury, UK, June 23-24.

2000 "Androgyny Revealed in Veronica Franco and Titian," American Association for Italian Studies, New York, New York, April 13-16.

2000 "The Troubadour Chanson: Action and Passion in Arnault Daniel's *Lo ferm voler qu'el cor m'intra*," The Twelfth Biennial New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Sarasota, FL, March 9-11.

## CAMPUS TALKS

2011 Approaching Shame: The Confrontation with a Personal and Political Affect, Anna Howard Shaw Fellowship Series, Boston University

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Wheaton College, MA, Sole Instructor**

Religious Perspectives of Death and Dying (fall 2014)

**St. Petersburg Junior College, Sole Instructor**

Western Humanities I: Ancient to Renaissance (fall 2002, fall 2003)

Western Humanities II: Renaissance to Modernity (spring 2003, spring 2004)

East/West Synthesis: Religion around the World (fall 2004)

**Hillsborough Community College, Sole Instructor**

Writing I (fall 1999, fall 2000, fall 2001)

Writing II (spring 2000, spring 2001, spring 2002)

Summer Study Abroad (summer 2001)

**Boston University, Teaching Assistant**

Principles and Practices of Restorative Justice (spring 2014)

Theology and War (spring 2012)

Introduction to Christian Education (Spring 2012)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2015 Research Assistant to Shelly Rambo, Boston University (spring)

2014 Research Assistant to Shelly Rambo, Boston University (spring)

2014 Post-Traumatic Public Theology Project, Boston University, Advisor: Shelly Rambo

2013 Research Assistant to Shelly Rambo, Boston University (spring)

2011 Research Assistant to Courtney Goto, Boston University (spring)

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Peer Review

Abstract Reviewer, Think Art: Memory, An Interdisciplinary Conference on the Arts, Humanity and Science, Boston, Massachusetts, 2011.

### To Community

Volunteer, El Barrio Firehouse Community Media Center, New York, NY, 2012

## CLINICAL TRAINING

2015 National Institute of Psychoanalysis (NIP) New York, NY, Integrative Trauma Certificate

## LANGUAGES

French: Advanced reading, writing, speaking

Italian: Intermediate reading, writing, speaking

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## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Society for Pastoral Care (2014-present)

International Society of Practical Theology (2013-present)

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (2013-present)

Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (2013-present)

International Society for Religion, Literature, and Culture (2012-present)

American Academy of Religion (2010-present)

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